HOLES

A screenplay by Louis Sachar
from his novel

Revisions by
Brent Hanley

Current Revisions by
Louis Sachar

Andrew Davis
Director

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(w/ scene #s)

FADE IN

1 EXT. DRY LAKE BED - DAY 1

Across the barren wasteland, a distant mountain range is barely visible through a haze of heat and dust. A LIZARD with vivid yellow spots flicks its tongue, then scurries across the cracked earth past an old and weathered sign that reads GREEN LAKE, TEXAS. Dust blows from the sign past the skeletal remains of a ghost town.

Further out we see many BOYS, aged 12-17, digging holes. Their orange prison uniforms are soaked with sweat and dirt. Pieces of cloth have been sewn to their caps to protect their necks from the brutal sun. A GUARD, big and menacing, wearing a cowboy hat and sun glasses, walks slowly past.

One SKINNY KID watches the guard go past, then stops digging. He leans on his shovel and takes several long, deep breaths. Tears streak his dirty face. His hands are bloody and blistered.

THE SOUND OF A RATTLESNAKE grabs his attention.

A SNAKE is coiled nearby. Its tail is rattling.

The kid's stare fixes on the snake as he sits down on a dirt pile. He begins untying the sneaker on his left foot.

Another boy takes a slow drink from his canteen, watching as the skinny kid removes his sneaker and very dirty sock.

The skinny kid staggers as he stands up. One shoe off, one shoe on, he steps gingerly across the hot ground toward the rattler. He stops before it, closes his eyes, then lowers his bare foot down on the snake.

The snake strikes.

As the boy's scream carries, we PULL BACK TO REVEAL thousands of holes have been dug across the vast, dry landscape. Shimmering heat waves distort the picture.

DISSOLVE TO:

2 EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY 2

A yellow school bus lumbers down a long straight road across a flat barren terrain.

3 INT. BUS - DESERT ROAD - DAY 3

There is only one passenger, a large, pasty faced, fourteen year old boy. This is STANLEY YELNATS.

A backpack lay on the seat next to him. He could be a normal kid on his way to school, except he is handcuffed to the arm rest.

He glances up. Only the top half of the DRIVER's face is visible in the rearview mirror. Beside him, a GUARD sits facing backwards, a rifle across his lap. His constant gaze unsettles Stanley.

STANLEY (V.O.)
If it hadn't been for my no-good, dirty-rotten, pig stealing great great grandfather, none of this would've happened...

Stanley turns to look out the dirty window at the endless emptiness.

NOSY NEIGHBOR (O.S.)
Are you going to be able to do something about the smell? I've called the city three times...

FLASHBACK TO:

4 INT. YELNATS CRUMMY APT. - HALLWAY - DAY 4

The NOSY NEIGHBOR stares at TWO POLICE OFFICERS from across the hall. The officers, male and female, knock on the door of a crummy apartment. Stanley stands in front of them, looking scared. His forehead is bruised.

MALE OFFICER
That's not why we're here ma'm.

NOSY NEIGHBOR
But this whole floor smells like dirty feet!

The door opens wide, revealing Stanley's MOTHER.

MOTHER
Stanley!

His MOTHER rushes to him and embraces him. STANLEY'S FATHER still has his hand on the door knob.

MALE OFFICER
Mr. Yelnats? I believe you spoke to Officer Lipton.

FATHER
Yes. It's all just a big mistake.

FEMALE OFFICER
We have a warrant to search the premises.

MOTHER
Are you all right, Stanley? What happened to your head?

5 INT. YELNATS CRUMMY APT - DAY 5

The officers step inside. Stanley and his parents follow.

STANLEY
It's nothing, Mom.

Stanley's GRANDFATHER rushes out from the bathroom, still buckling his belt.

GRANDFATHER
Don't say nothing until we talk to our lawyer!
(to the officers)
You're gonna be sorry you ever messed with Stanley Yelnats! Let me see that!

Grandfather grabs the warrant. The officers give each other a look and move past him into the cheaply furnished apartment. Oddly, there are piles of old sneakers everywhere, on top of the TV, dangling from bookshelves and doorknobs.

5A INT. YELNATS CRUMMY APT. - STANLEY"S BEDROOM - DAY 5A

The officers enter Stanley's bedroom, followed by Stanley and his grandfather. Twin beds are against opposite walls. Old photographs of immigrants hang over one of the beds. Over the other is a POSTER of Clyde "Sweet Feet" Livingston, a famous baseball player. A FLASH of light as it is photographed.

GRANDFATHER
We share the room. How do you know it's not mine?

MALE OFFICER
(to Stanley)
Which bed is yours?

GRANDFATHER
You don't have to answer that. We have the right to remain silent.

FEMALE OFFICER
Would it be nice.

STANLEY
I sleep here.

He indicates the bed under the poster.

6 INT. YELNATS CRUMMY APT. - KITCHEN - DAY 6

Stanley, Mother, Father and Grandfather are seated around the kitchen table, eating ice cream. Half a sneaker is disintegrating in a jar of vinegar on the window sill.

GRANDFATHER
It's all because of your no good, dirty rotten, pig-stealing, great-great-grandfather.

MOTHER
Don't start that nonsense. There is no curse on this family.

FATHER
Just on the men of this family.

MOTHER
Not on my son! And he's going to prove it one day. You're going to be a great success, aren't you, Stanley?!

GRANDFATHER
(gruffly sings)
If only, if only the woodpecker sighs...

MOTHER
Please don't sing that song.

GRANDFATHER
...the bark on the tree was as soft as the skies.

MOTHER
Don't listen to him, Stanley.

STANLEY
Don't worry, Mom, I don't believe in the curse.

GRANDFATHER
If he just stole a pig, I mean a man's got to eat. But why steal from a one-legged gypsy? We're going to need a damn good lawyer.

FATHER
We can't afford a lawyer.

MOTHER
We don't need one. Stanley will just tell the truth.

JUDGE (O.S.)
Stanley Yelnats, please rise.

7 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 7

The Clyde Livingston poster and his shoes sit on the evidence table. Stanley, in a poor-fitting suit and tie, stands. Behind him, Father and Grandfather also stand.

JUDGE
Stanley Yelnats, the FOURTH.

Embarrassed, the older Stanleys sit back down. Other JUVENILES in the courthouse murmur or laugh outright.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
I see before me someone with no moral center, no compassion for others. I could send you to jail, and I wouldn't lose one bit of sleep over it, but I don't know what good that would do...There's currently a vacancy at Camp Green Lake. They help troubled youth build character. The choice is yours: Camp Green Lake, or jail.

Stanley looks at his family, then turns back to the judge.

STANLEY
I've never been to camp before.

8 EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY 8

The school bus continues down the road. A donkey cart, led by a handsome black MAN dressed in clothes from another era, moves across the road. The bus heads right toward him, not slowing. The man doesn't even turn, as the bus closes in on him, then MOVES RIGHT THROUGH HIM.

9 INT. BUS - DESERT ROAD - DAY 9

Stanley looks out the window at a sign: YOU ARE ENTERING CAMP GREEN LAKE, JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY.

The bus slows to a stop. The guard unlocks Stanley's handcuffs.

GUARD
Just do as your told, and don't give anybody any reason to think you're a wise-ass. You hear what I'm saying?

Stanley nods, staring through the window at another sign declaring: IT IS A VIOLATION OF THE TEXAS PENAL CODE TO BRING GUNS, EXPLOSIVES WEAPONS, DRUGS OR ALCOHOL ONTO THE PREMISES.

10 EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - PARKING LOT - DAY 10

The Guard and Stanley, exit the bus onto hard, dry dirt. The guard carries a CLIPBOARD.

STANLEY
Thanks for the ride.

The DRIVER is surprised by Stanley's politeness.

DRIVER
You be careful out there.

Stanley, backpack in hand, looks around.

STANLEY
Where's the lake?

GUARD
See, now that's what I'm talking about.

Confused, Stanley follows the guard to the office. A group of exhausted, dirt encrusted boys, wearily carry shovels towards a shed marked, LIBRARY. They stare at Stanley.

11 INT. CAMP - OFFICE - DAY 11

The CLIPBOARD is now held by a MAN wearing sun glasses and a cowboy hat, seated at a desk. A rattlesnake tattoo curls around his forearm. He is MR. SIR. If he wasn't running a prison, he'd be an inmate.

Stanley stares at a posted warning to immediately report any sighting of a yellow spotted lizard.

GUARD
(to Mr. Sir))
What's with the sunflower seeds?

A huge sack of sunflower seeds sits on the desk next to a cold soda. Mr. Sir spits a shell into a waste paper basket.

MR. SIR
I quit smoking.
(looking at clipboard)
Stanley Yelnats, the Fourth?

STANLEY
See, everyone in my family names their sons Stanley because it's Yelnats spelled backwards. Y-E-L-N-

A nudge from the bus Guard shuts Stanley up.

CLOSE ON CLIPBOARD.

"Stanley Yelnats, the Fourth" is written among various legalese. Mr. Sir's finger goes backwards beneath it.

Mr. Sir signs a form, tears off a sheet of paper, and hands the clipboard back to the guard. Then reaches into a small refrigerator next to him and grabs two cans of cold soda. Stanley watches expectantly. Mr. Sir hands both to the guard who nods his thanks and leaves.

MR. SIR
Gimme.

Stanley hesitates, then hands over his backpack. Mr. Sir dumps out the contents: stationery, pens, toothbrush, toothpaste, a photo of Stanley's parents and grandfather.

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
My name is Mr. Sir. Whenever you speak to me you must call me by my name. Is that clear?

STANLEY
Yes...
(doubtful)
Mr. Sir.

MR. SIR
You think that's funny?

STANLEY
No, Mr. Sir.

MR. SIR
So you're a thief, are you?

STANLEY
Well, no, I...it's a long story...

whacks him.

MR. SIR
So you're a thief, are you?

STANLEY
Yes, Mr. Sir.

Mr. Sir smiles, then takes a long drink from his can of soda.

MR. SIR
You thirsty, Stanley?

STANLEY
(grateful)
Yes, Mr. Sir.

The smile disappears. Mr. Sir takes a long gulp himself.

MR. SIR
Well, you'd better get used to it.
You're gonna be thirsty for
eighteen months...

12 EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - DAY 12

MR. SIR takes STANLEY across the compound. Stanley carries his backpack. Other boys, dirty and bedraggled watch, keeping their distance.

MR. SIR
Look around you. What do you see?

STANLEY
Not much, Mr. Sir.

MR. SIR
(laughs)
See any guard towers?

STANLEY
No. Mr. Sir.

MR. SIR
How about an electric fence?

There are no fences.

STANLEY
No, Mr. Sir.

Mr. Sir abruptly stops walking.

MR. SIR
You want to run away?

The question scares Stanley.

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
Go ahead. Start running. I'm not going to stop you.

Stanley doesn't know what kind of game Mr. Sir is playing.

MR. SIR (cont'd)
(taps his holster)
Don't worry. I'm not going to shoot you. This is for yellow-spotted lizards. I wouldn't waste a bullet on you.

STANLEY
I'm not going to run away, Mr. Sir.

MR. SIR
Good thinkin', Stanley. No one runs away from here. We don't need a fence. Know why? We've got the only water for a hundred miles. You want to run away?
(spits out a sunflower seed shell)
The buzzards'll pick you clean by the end of the third day.

13 INT. CAMP - SUPPLY SHED - DAY 13

Mr. Sir and Stanley enter.

Two old washers and a dryer operate noisily. MONK, 16, the toughest kid in camp, despite having only one arm, and his buddy, LUMP are putting wet clothes into a dryer. *

MR. SIR
Strip.

Embarrassed, Stanley begins to undress.

Monk gets the things Stanley will need from metal shelving. Stanley waits, shirtless, and in his underpants. *

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
You get two sets of clothes, one for work, one for relaxation.
(MORE)

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
After three days, your work clothes will be washed, and your second set will become your work clothes.

Stanley steps into his orange jumpsuit.

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
You are to dig one hole each day, five feet deep and five feet in diameter. Your shovel is your measuring stick. The longer it takes you to dig, the longer you'll be out in the hot sun. And you'll need to keep alert for rattlesnakes and lizards.

STANLEY
Rattlesnakes?

MR. SIR
If you don't bother them, they won't bother you.
(he spits a seed)
Usually.

Monk chuckles demonically.

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
Being bit by a rattler is not the worst thing that can happen to you. You won't die.
(spits again)
Usually. But you don't want to get bit by a yellow-spotted lizard. That is the worst thing that can happen to you. You will die a slow and painful death.

Mr. Sir looks around and then rests his eyes on Stanley.

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
Always.

Stanley is finishing doing up his jumpsuit when Mr. Pendanski, a rumpled, overgrown, college drop-out, steps purposefully into the supply room.

PENDANSKI
You must be Stanley Yelnats. I'm Mr. Pendanski, your counselor.

Stanley shakes hands with Pendanski.

PENDANSKI (CONT'D)
I just want you to know, Stanley, I respect you. You may have done some bad things, but that doesn't make you a bad kid.

Mr. Sir spits out a shell and walks away.

MR. SIR
If you're gonna start with that touchy-feely shit, I'm goin' back to the office.

PENDANSKI
I'm going to help you turn your life around. But you're going to have to help me. Can I count on you, Stanley?

STANLEY
Yes, sir.

14 EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - EVENING 14

Stanley, carrying his backpack and supplies, follows Pendanski through the compound towards a row of tents.

Pendanski
You'll be in D-Tent.
(pointing to various other out buildings)
That's the Wreck Room, the Mess Hall, and the showers.

Nothing but an L-shaped cinderblock wall with industrial shower heads. *

PENDANSKI (CONT'D)
The showers last four minutes and shut off automatically, so you better make sure you get all the soap off...

He physically turns Stanley around 180 degrees.

PENDANSKI (cont'd)
That's the Warden's cabin over there.

ANGLE ON CABIN

It is shaded by two oak trees. The only trees anywhere, a hammock stretches between them.

The cabin is rustic, but adorned with a window air-conditioning unit, and a Direct TV satellite dish. Older boys wash a vintage 1960's white Chrysler parked nearby.

PENDANSKI (CONT'D)
Stay away from it. The most important rule at Camp Green Lake. Don't upset The Warden.

STANLEY
Yeah, he seemed kind of...

PENDANSKI
Who? Mr. Sir? Oh, he's not the warden. He's just been in a bad mood since he quit smoking.

Three boys seem to emerge from nowhere. They come up on Stanley from behind. They're dripping with sweat and are so dirty that Stanley can hardly tell them apart. They are:

ARMPIT-- bare chested, with the top half of his uniform rolled down and tied around his waist. This is what Shaquille O'Neil looked like at 13.

SQUID-- a large white kid with a mean and bitter grin.

X-RAY-- tough, black, not as physically imposing as the others. But he carries himself with street-smart swagger. His thick glasses are so covered in grime it's a wonder he can see out of them.

X-RAY
Hey, Mom, who's the Neanderthal?

PENDANSKI
This is Stanley.

The boys snicker.

ARMPIT
How's Barf Bag?

PENDANSKI
Lewis is still in the hospital. He won't be returning. Stanley, I'd like you to meet Rex, Alan and Theodore.

X-RAY
The name's X-Ray. And that's Squid and Armpit.

SQUID
And he's Mom.

PENDANSKI
They all have nicknames. But I prefer to use the names their parents gave them. The names society will recognize them by.

X-RAY
It ain't just a nickname, Mom. I got x-ray vision. I can see inside you. You got a big, fat heart.

Pendanski smiles.

PENDANSKI
Theodore, please show Stanley his cot.

Armpit doesn't move.

X-RAY
Go on, Armpit.

Armpit nods to X-Ray and leads the way into D-Tent.

15 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - EVENING 15

Armpit kicks a cot.

ARMPIT
Barf Bag slept here.

STANLEY
O - kay.

Stanley notices another boy on a cot in a corner. He seems clean and rested. He doesn't even glance at Stanley. He is:

ZERO -- small, with light brown skin and big dark brown oval eyes. He's quiet, but not shy or fearful. Rather, his silence is a form of defiance-- of everyone and everything.

Squid enters followed by two more guys:

MAGNET -- a wiry Hispanic with sharp brown eyes, who smiles but never laughs.

And ZIGZAG -- a thin lanky blonde with frizzy hair, dark [redacted] skin, who giggles like a psychopath.

MAGNET
Hey. I'm Magnet, and that's Zigzag.

Zigzag stares at Stanley. His spooky eyes cause Stanley to turn away.

Pendanski moves to the kid in the corner.

PENDANSKI
And this is Zero. Say hello to Stanley, Zero.

No reply. Pendanski puts his hand on Zero's shoulder.

PENDANSKI (CONT'D)
You know why his name is Zero? Cause there's nothing inside his head.

He slaps Zero on the side of his head. The boys all laugh at the inside joke. Zero shows no reaction.

ZIGZAG
Did you tell him about the lizards?

PENDANSKI
Now, Ricky, don't scare Stanley.

X-RAY
His name's not Ricky. It's Zigzag.

PENDANSKI
I'll leave you boys to get acquainted. If you have any questions, Stanley, just ask Theodore. He will be your mentor. You hear that Theodore? I'm depending on you.

Pendanski exits. Armpit squirts saliva through his teeth.

MAGNET
Thanks Armpit. I really want your spit on my cot.

Armpit spits again. Zigzag giggles.

A moment of awkward silence as the boys look at Stanley.

X-RAY
I'm outta here.

When he leaves, the others follow, grabbing towels and fresh clothes. Stanley is left alone with Zero.

Against the side of the tent are seven crates, turned on their sides facing outwards. They are filled with towels, dirty uniforms, and the boys personal effects. One is empty.

STANLEY
Is this where I"m supposed to put my stuff?

Zero doesn't respond.

16 EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - EVENING 16

X-Ray and the guys are about to enter a room marked with a sign, WRECK ROOM, as Stanley hurries up behind them.

STANLEY
Hey, Theodore. Is there someplace I can fill my canteen?

Armpit lunges with lightening speed, grabs Stanley's head, and pushes his face into his armpit.

ARMPIT
My name's not Thee-o-dore.

Squid and Zigzag go crazy with laughter.

ZIGZAG
It's Armpit.

Armpit throws Stanley to the ground. Stanley stares up, terrified.

ARMPIT
(no longer angry)
There's a water spigot on the wall outside the shower.

STANLEY
Thanks... Armpit.

17 INT. CAMP - MESS HALL - EVENING 17

Stanley cautiously walks over to a table where the boys from D-Tent are eating ravenously.

X-RAY
(to Armpit)
I read your record, man.
(MORE)

X-RAY (cont'd)
Know what they said about you? "...at-risk, violent, unmanageable youth. The system has completely failed him."

As Stanley sits X-RAY grabs the bread off his tray.

X-RAY (CONT'D)
You don't want your bread, do you? You didn't dig today, so you're not as hungry as the rest of us, right?

X-Ray eats Stanley's bread.

ARMPIT
Hey, I didn't start the fight, but I sure the hell finished it!

X-RAY
(to Stanley)
So what'd they get you for?

It takes Stanley a moment.

STANLEY
Stealing a pair of shoes.

The other boys laugh. Even Zero turns and looks. For the first time he seems interested in what the boys are saying.

SQUID
From a store? Or were they on someone's feet.

MAGNET
Yeah, he killed the dude first. Just forgot to mention that part.

Zigzag giggles.

STANLEY
Actually, they belonged to Clyde Livingston.

ARMPIT
Sweet Feet?

X-RAY
Yeah, right!

STANLEY
They were his World Series shoes.

Zero is paying close attention now.

SQUID
Only man to ever hit four triples in one game...

MAGNET
Tiene mucho corazon.

ARMPIT
What's that mean?

MAGNET
He's got a lot of heart.

STANLEY
He donated his shoes to raise money for a homeless shelter. Rich people paid hundreds of dollars to eat the same food the homeless eat every day for free. They were going to auction off the shoes.

SQUID
And you stole them?

STANLEY
That's why I'm here.

Magnet whistles softly.

MAGNET
That's cold man.

Zero suddenly steps forward.

ZERO
They have red x's on 'em?

Stunned silence. Everyone stares at Zero.

X-RAY
(turns to Stanley)
You got Zero to talk!

ARMPIT
What else can you do, Zero?

STANLEY
Yeah, they did...

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP on red X's.

PULL BACK to reveal the X's are the brand insignia on a pair of baseball shoes.

18 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 18

Clyde Livingston himself is on the witness stand.

CLYDE LIVINGSTON
I don't know what kind of person would steal from homeless children? I grew up in that home. You're no fan of mine! You disgust me!

STANLEY's face quivers. He's seated at the defense table, no lawyer in sight.

CUT TO:

Stanley's on the witness stand. His face still trembling.

STANLEY
I was late getting out of school.

19 INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY 19

Stanley is trying to get a book out of his locker. A book falls. As he puts it back, another book falls out.

DERRICK, a bully, sneaks up behind him and grabs his binder. He teases Stanley by holding it to him, and leading him helplessly down the hall. Other students watch, some laugh, but one PRETTY GIRL looks on with compassion, and pity.

20 INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BATHROOM - DAY 20

Stanley retrieves his binder from a toilet.

STANLEY (V.O.)
So I missed the bus. That's how I found the shoes... while I was walking home.

21 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 21

PROSECUTOR
Clyde Livingston's shoes?

STANLEY
Yes, Sir. I mean I didn't know whose shoes they were or anything.

PROSECUTOR
And where did you find these shoes?

Stanley hesitates. He knows no one will believe him. He looks to his mother. She nods encouragingly.

STANLEY
They fell from the sky.

22 EXT. STREET BELOW OVERPASS - DAY 22

Two baseball shoes, tied together, fall in slow motion from above, then gather speed, and conk Stanley on the head.

PROSECUTOR (V.O.)
They just fell from the sky.

We now see that Stanley is standing near a highway overpass. He picks up the shoes. He looks around, confused.

STANLEY (V.O.)
Someone must have thrown them out a car window or something.

Stanley sniffs a shoe and makes a face. He starts running.

PROSECUTOR (V.O.)
Or something. Okay, so someone threw Clyde Livingston's shoes, estimated to be worth over five thousand dollars, out of a car window. Then why did you try to run away from the police?

A police car pulls across the curb, stopping Stanley. The officers jump out of the vehicle. A female officer takes the shoes from Stanley. She looks at the red X's. She pulls out a CRUMPLED PAPER TOWEL which had been stuffed into a sneaker. She smells the shoes, and holds them away at arms length.

23 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 23

STANLEY
I wasn't running from the police, I was just running... See, it's kind of hard to explain. My dad's an inventor. For the last year he's been trying to invent a cure for foot odor. But nothing he tries works. So, it's like, when the shoes just fell out of the sky, it was destiny.

JUDGE
Destiny...

23A INT. CAMP - D-TENT - NIGHT 23A

Stanley lies on in his cot, contemplating his fate. The other boys sleep in various positions, dead to the world. Armpit is snoring. Suddenly, Squid stumbles from bed to Armpit's cot and WHACKS him with a pillow. Stanley rolls over to try and sleep, sniffs his cot, and makes a face. *

24 INT. YELNATS CRUMMY APT. - KITCHEN - DAY 24 *

Stanley is having lunch with his parents and grandfather.

GRANDFATHER
Your no good, dirty rotten, pig stealin', great-great-grandfather, that's who sealed our destiny.

MOTHER
The judge knows Stanley told the truth.

GRANDFATHER
Hah! Why do you think none of your inventions worked?

FATHER
I learn from failure.

GRANDFATHER
It doesn't matter how smart you are. You need luck. Something we ain't got.

MOTHER
What about your father, the first Stanley Yelnats.

GRANDFATHER
The son of the pig stealer?

MOTHER
Yeah, he wasn't so unlucky! You told me he made a fortune in the stock market.

FATHER
Some luck, he lost everything when he was robbed by Kate Barlow.

STANLEY
Kissin' Kate Barlow... that's so cool.

MOTHER
There's nothing cool about it. She was a ruthless killer.

SOUND of RUNNING HORSES and GUN SHOTS.

STANLEY
Too bad she didn't kiss him. That would've been really cool.

25 EXT. TEXAS RUGGED TERRAIN - 1905 - DAY 25

KISSIN' KATE BARLOW, beautiful and wild, wearing lots of flashy jewelry, approaches an overturned stagecoach, one wheel still spinning. Three male OUTLAWS are gathering the loot and untying the horses.

GRANDFATHER (V.O.)
She only kissed the men she killed. She left him stranded in the desert -- no food, no water for 16 days.

A fat Wells Fargo armed guard lies dead on the ground. A lipstick mark on his cheeks. *

Stanley-The-First, shaken up, and dressed as a respectable businessman, complete with beaver skin hat, emerges from the stage, clutching a FOOTLOCKER. An Outlaw takes it from him.

Kate takes his fancy hat, and models it, to the delight of her gang. Then decides to keep for herself. She hops on a horse, and they all ride away.

Stanley the First is left alone in the desert.

MOTHER (V.O.)
If she'd kissed him, she'd have killed him, and you'd never have been born.

26 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - NIGHT 26

Stanley still lies awake. He's barely slept a wink. *

A WAKE-UP HORN BLARES.

27 EXT. CAMP - TOOL SHED - BEFORE DAWN 27

As the horn blares, the camp comes to life. It's still dark out. Boys stumble out of the tents and go to the Library shed. Mr. Sir unlocks the padlock, and swings open the door. It's full of shovels. * *

Stanley is jostled by other boys grabbing shovels. He manages to grab one, but another hand grabs it. The shovel has a piece of tape on the handle.

MAGNET
That's X-Ray's.

Magnet hands the shovel to X-Ray.

MAGNET (CONT'D)
It's a quarter inch shorter than the other shovels.

Stanley's confused.

X-RAY
Smaller shovel, smaller hole.

Stanley gets another shovel.

28 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAWN 28

Silhouetted against the sky, Mr. Sir leads 35 boys out to the digging area.

Perched on a rock, a yellow-spotted LIZARD watches, red markings around it's huge eyes. It opens it's mouth to reveal black teeth and a translucent white tongue.

CLOSE ON a boot heel, making an X in the dirt.

Stanley, shovel in hand, watches Mr. Sir mark the spot.

MR. SIR
Look, no one's going to baby-sit you. But if you dig up anything interesting, you're to report it to me or Pendanski. If the warden likes what you find, you'll get the rest of the day off.

STANLEY
What am I supposed to be looking for?

MR. SIR
You're not looking for anything. You're building character. We got us a little philosophy here; you take a bad boy, make him dig holes all day in the hot sun and it'll turn him into a good boy.

Stanley brings his shovel down on Mr. Sir's mark. It bounces off the hard ground without making a dent. Stanley tries again. He steps on the blade, and pushes it into the ground, unearthing a small mound of dirt.

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
One down, 10 million to go...

He takes off for the truck.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL The boys from D-Tent digging in the same area. The others are in clusters spread out across the dry lake bed.

Stanley continues to struggle to work his shovel into the dirt.

CLOSE ON STANLEY'S SHOVEL

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON ANOTHER SHOVEL

29 EXT. BARN - LATVIA - 1875 - MORNING 29

A good-looking young man around 18, ELYA YELNATS, is shoveling manure. He looks a lot like Stanley since he is his great-great-grandfather.

MYRA MENKE, a voluptuous young girl with a vacant stare, strolls past the barn. Elya is helpless in front of her rolling hips and shining hair. Miraculously, she speaks.

MYRA
Hello, Elya Yelnats.

Elya's mouth opens, but no words come out. Myra giggles as she continues on her way.

30 EXT. MENKE HOUSE - PORCH - LATVIA - 1875 - EVENING 30

Elya, in his best clothes, stands before MORRIS MENKE.

ELYA
Mr. Menke, I would like your permission to marry Myra.

Morris Menke has a mouth full of food. He washes it down with a swig of beer.

MORRIS MENKE
You too?

We now see IGOR BARKOV, a fat, sweaty, man in his fifties, eating sausage and drinking beer as he looks out into the side yard. He glances at Elya, then back to -

31 EXT. MENKE HOUSE - SIDE YARD - EVENING 31

Myra at a wash basin, scrubbing clothes, wearing only her undergarments. They've gotten wet and semi-transparent, and cling to her shapely body. She drops a bar of soap, and bends over to pick it up.

CLOSE ON HER BUTT. Igor drools.

31A EXT. MENKE HOUSE - PORCH - EVENING 31A

MORRIS MENKE
Igor Barkov has offered his fattest pig for her. He brings me beer and sausage. Whadda you got?

ELYA
A heart full of love.

MORRIS MENKE
I'd rather have a fat pig!

Igor turns and laughs. He is rather like a fat pig himself.

CLOSE ON Elya sizing up the situation.

32 EXT. ZERONI HOUSE - LATVIA - 1875 - MORNING 32

A crudely painted sign, complete with crystal ball and floating hands reads: "MADAME ZERONI, FORTUNES TOLD"

MADAME ZERONI (O.S.)
You listen to Madame Zeroni. Morris Menke's a shmuck.

TILT DOWN TO:

Elya and MADAME ZERONI, an old Egyptian, are shelling peas on the porch. She smokes a pipe. Her voice is harsh and raspy.

MADAME ZERONI (CONT'D)
And so is his daughter. She has a pretty face. So what? Her head is empty as a flowerpot.

She spits.

MADAME ZERONI (CONT'D)
You should go to America, Elya. Like my son. That's your future. Not Myra Menke.

Elya doesn't respond. He obviously doesn't agree. Madame Zeroni studies his face.

MADAME ZERONI (CONT'D)
You're a shmuck, too. C'mon.

We now see that Madame Zeroni is sitting in a crude wheelchair. She is missing half of her left leg. Elya rolls her around to the back of the house.

33 EXT. ZERONI HOUSE - LATVIA - 1875 - MORNING 33

Elya and Madame Zeroni are looking into a pig pen at a huge sow and her many piglets. She points to the scrawniest one.

MADAME ZERONI
You can have that one.

ELYA
But this solves nothing!

MADAME ZERONI
He'll grow.

She points to a distant mountain.

MADAME ZERONI (CONT'D)
On that mountain is a stream where the water flows uphill.

33A EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - LATVIA - 1875 - MORNING 33A

Elya carries the little piglet up the mountain.

MADAME ZERONI (O.S.)
Every day you will carry the pig up the mountain. Let it drink the water, and sing to it.
(sings)
If only, if only, the woodpecker sighs...

34 EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - LATVIA - 1875 - DAY 34

The pig, a little bit bigger now, drinks from the stream as Elya stands watching.

MADAME ZERONI (O.S.)
(sings)
The bark on the tree was as soft as the skies...
While the wolf waits below, hungry and lonely...
He cries to the moo-oo-o-n, if only, if only.

35 EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - LATVIA - 1875 - DAY 35

Elya carries the pig, much bigger now, up the mountain.

MADAME ZERONI (O.S.)
Every day the pig will get fatter and you will get stronger. Soon, it will be as fat as Igor Barkov.
(laughs)
But after you give the pig to Menke, you must carry Madame Zeroni up the mountain. And sing while I drink.

36 EXT. ZERONI HOUSE - LATVIA - 1875 - MORNING 36

Madame Zeroni, smoking her pipe, looks at Elya, who's all dressed up, with a big fat pig next to him on a rope.

MADAME ZERONI
I know you, Elya. All you think about is schtupping Myra. But don't forget to come back for Madame Zeroni, or else...

In her sultriest voice, smoke swirling around her face.

MADAME ZERONI (CONT'D)
... you and your family will be cursed for always and eternity!

37 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 37

Stanley grimaces, his face beet red and drenched in sweat. He hoists a shovelful of dirt out of his hole, but it just tumbles back in on him, covering his canteen. As he picks up the canteen, he almost falls over. The canteen is empty.

A cloud of dust moves across the landscape trailing a pickup, driven by Mr. Sir. It stops nearby. The other boys drop their shovels and hurry towards it. Magnet slows as he passes Stanley.

MAGNET
Hey, man, your dirt piles are too close to your hole. You need to move 'em out further.

STANLEY
Great.

He examines his blistered hands, and sucks on a popped blister.

MAGNET
First hole's the hardest.

Magnet heads to the truck where Armpit, Squid, Zigzag and Zero wait in line. X-Ray goes to the front of the line. Magnet cuts in line ahead of Zero. Stanley takes his place at the end of the line.

Mr. Sir fills X-Ray's canteen from a tank on the back of the truck.

ANGLE ON the STREAM OF WATER going from tank into a canteen.

38 EXT. MENKE HOUSE - LATVIA - 1875 - DAY 38 *

CLOSE ON liquor being poured into a glass.

Morris Menke has poured himself a glass of schnapps. He drinks it in one gulp.

PULL BACK

Two fat pigs root at his feet. Off to the side stand Igor Barkov, dirty and ugly, and Elya, strong and handsome. *

MORRIS MENKE
These are two of the finest pigs I have ever seen! How am I to decide? If only I had two daughters...

ELYA
Why not let Myra decide?

IGOR
What does she know about pigs?

ELYA
She knows her heart.

Morris laughs and slaps Elya on the back.

MORRIS MENKE
Oh, why not? Myra!

Myra comes out onto the porch, smiling at Elya and Igor. Elya flushes. Igor winks.

MORRIS MENKE (CONT'D)
Who do you choose, Igor Barkov or Elya Yelnats?

MYRA
You want me to decide?

MORRIS MENKE
That's right, my blossom.

Myra looks at the two men; the handsome Elya, the brutish Igor, then turns to the pigs.

MYRA
Gee, I don't know, which pig weighs more?

Elya is stunned.

MORRIS MENKE
They're the same.

Myra gets down on her knees and examines the pigs. Elya can't believe his eyes. Igor can't believe her ass.

MYRA
(getting up again)
Whew! This is hard...Oh, I know! I'll think of a number between one and ten...
(closes her eyes)
Okay, I'm ready!

IGOR
Ten!

ELYA
(disgusted)
Marry Igor. You can keep my pig as a wedding present.

Elya walks away, looking to the heavens in frustration. Myra's father is overjoyed.

39 EXT. MENKE HOUSE - LATVIA - 1875 - POV - SKY - DAY 39

MORRIS MENKE (O.C.)
Two pigs for one daughter!

THE SKY BECOMES THE BURNING SUN.

TILT DOWN TO -

40 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 40

The boys are at different levels, but all are deep in their holes. Only their heads, necks, or shoulders rise above ground level. Stanley is the exception, being only waist deep. Pained, he shovels out more dirt.

Zero lays his shovel flat on the bottom of his hole. It just fits. Then he holds it upright against the side. His hole is as deep and as wide as his shovel.

Stanley dumps another shovelful on his dirt pile as he watches Zero climb up out of his. Zero looks down at his hole, spits in it, then starts back toward camp.

STANLEY
You done already?

Zero just keeps walking.

ZIGZAG
That's one weird dude.

ARMPIT
Yeah? How would you know?

Stanley watches Zero disappear towards camp, his shovel on his shoulder.

41 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - LATVIA - 1875 - EVENING 41 *

Elya moves down a country road, duffle bag on his shoulder. *

42 EXT. ZERONI HOUSE - LATVIA - 1875 - EVENING 42

Madame Zeroni waits in front of her house, smoking her pipe. She hums her pig lullaby as a full moon slips behind a cloud.

ESTABLISH - EASTERN EUROPEAN HARBOR - 1895 - NIGHT

Move across a vintage photograph.

43 EXT. SHIP - LATVIA - 1875 - NIGHT 43

Madame Zeroni's melody swells as the moon reappears from behind the cloud. Elya, sleeping on his duffle bag on the deck of the ship, abruptly wakes, remembering something. *

44 EXT. ZERONI HOUSE - LATVIA - 1875 - NIGHT 44

Madame Zeroni spits in the dirt and goes inside.

46 EXT. DIGGING AREA - EVENING 46

Squid spits in his hole, then starts back toward camp.

Stanley watches him go. *

WIDEN OUT TO: *

The vast area feels deserted. Stanley is alone-still digging. *

CLOSE ON - Stanley deep in his hole. He stands his shovel upright. His hole is deep enough, but the shovel doesn't fit when he tries to lay it flat. He scrapes dirt off the side of the hole, and tosses it on a dirt pile.

Laying the shovel back down, it fits! He rotates it. It still fits.

Thrilled, Stanley tosses up his shovel, puts his hands on the rim, and tries to pull himself up. He can't. He turns around, TRAPPED IN HIS OWN HOLE! Stanley uses his heel to scratch and kick a foothold in the side in order to step up and out. Wearily, he picks up his shovel and walks away. Then he stops, returns to the hole, and spits in it.

47 INT. CAMP - SHOWERS - DUSK 47

Eyes closed, Stanley lets the water pour over him. It abruptly turns off, but he doesn't move.

48 INT. CAMP - MESS HALL - NIGHT 48

As STANLEY moves slowly through the food line, the other boys from D-Tent are eating greedily.

ARMPIT
You're never gonna get outa here, how you gonna jump on a moving truck?

ZIGZAG
No problemo. I'll hide down by the ditch

(MORE)

ZIGZAG (cont'd)
When the truck slows down over it, I hop on the back, and I'm on my way to freedom. While you're all digging in the dirt, I'll be lying on a beach, a babe on each side.

He pours a huge amount of ketchup into his stew.

MAGNET
Yeah, your aunt and your grandmother.

The other boys laugh. Stanley collapses next to Magnet, plops his spoon into his stew, and wearily begins to eat.

ZIGZAG
Look at him. He can hardly lift his spoon.

X-RAY
Man, you got to be slowest digger I've ever seen.

STANLEY
Well, the first hole's the hardest.

X-RAY
No way. The second hole's harder. You're hurtin' before you even get started. You think you're sore now, just wait till morning. Am I right?

ARMPIT
That's right.

X-RAY
Plus the fun's gone.

STANLEY
The fun?

X-RAY
Don't lie to me. I bet you always wanted to dig a big hole, right? Every kid in the world wants to dig a great big hole. To China, right?

STANLEY
Uh, right.

X-RAY
See, that's what I'm saying. But now the fun's gone.
(MORE)

X-RAY (cont'd)
And you still got to dig, again, and again and again.

ZIGZAG
But what about Chinese kids?

49 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - NIGHT 49

The boys, including Stanley, lay dead to the world. Armpit snores.

SOUND OF WAKE-UP HORN

Stanley raises his head, groans and his head drops back down.

STANLEY (V.O.)
Dear Mom, I'm having a great time at camp.

He rolls off his bed onto the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

50 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 50

Stanley, suffering, takes a break on the edge of his hole.

STANLEY (V.O.)
We've been out on the lake all day and the water is cool and refreshing. Once I pass the swimming test I'll get to learn how to water ski...

Stanley's canteen is empty. Armpit walks by and pushes Stanley from the edge of his hole into it.

STANLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I've made lots of friends, and I'm really enjoying the wildlife.

51 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - EVENING 51

A SCORPION crawls out from under Stanley's top sheet as Stanley sits on his cot, writing a letter.

52 EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - EVENING 52

Stanley walks across the compound past groups of boys huddling in menacing threesomes and foursomes. He heads towards a mail slot in Sir's office door, letter in hand.

STANLEY (V.O.)
The other boys aren't bad kids. Like me, they were just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Squid moves to Stanley and grabs the letter.

SQUID
Who you writin' to?
(reads)
Aw, you miss your mommy and daddy?

STANLEY
I don't want them to worry.

SQUID
They don't care. Believe me, they're glad to be rid of you.

Squid crumples the envelope, throws it across the courtyard and walks away. Stanley has to retrieve it to mail it.

53 EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - NIGHT 53

Stanley, carrying his toothbrush and toothpaste, is walking back towards D-TENT.

MR. SIR (O.C.)
Don't move.

Stanley stops. Mr. Sir is pointing a pistol at him. Stanley slowly turns to see the big red eyes of a yellow spotted lizard nearby. It opens it's mouth, showing its black teeth and white tongue. It leaps and -

BANG! Gets blown to bits. Stanley's bug-eyed.

ZIGZAG (O.S)
Ooh, what color was its blood?

54 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - NIGHT 54

Stanley still holds his toothbrush and toothpaste. He is the center of attention.

STANLEY
I couldn't tell.

ZIGZAG
I wish I'da seen it. BANG!

ARMPIT
If Mr. Sir didn't shoot it, you...

X-RAY
You wouldn't be diggin' no more holes.

SQUID
You'd be in a hole.

MAGNET
Each one's got exactly thirteen spots.

X-RAY
You ever get close enough to count 'em Magnet, you're already dead.

ZIGZAG
You know, we're building houses for 'em. They live in the holes we dig. I've seen like ten lizards in one hole.

X-RAY
Yeah well, just 'cause Zigzag sees something, don't necessarily mean it's there.

ZIGZAG
And just 'cause you don't see something, doesn't mean it's not there.

ANGLE ON Armpit, trying to figure out if that makes sense.

55 EXT. DIGGING AREA - MORNING 55

CLOSE UP ON ROCK. Stanley studies it, then cleans it with water from his canteen. It's the fossil of a fish. Thin lines represent it's tiny bones.

A cloud of dust, as the pick-up truck, this time driven by Pendanski, approaches.

56 EXT. DIGGING AREA - MORNING 56

Pendanski fills Zero's canteen, then reaches for Stanley's, who gives him the rock instead.

STANLEY
I found something. It's a fossil. See.

PENDANSKI
Interesting.

STANLEY
Do I get the rest of the day off?

Pendanski looks oddly at him. The other boys gather to see what's happening.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
Mr. Sir said I'd get the day off if I found something interesting.

PENDANSKI
(a short laugh)
Sorry, Stanley. The warden doesn't care about fossils.

He gives the rock back to Stanley and takes his canteen. Stanley is crestfallen.

SQUID
Hey, lemme see that.

He takes the rock from Stanley. All the boys except Zero gather around to look at the fossil. Zero just keeps digging.

X-RAY
I don't see nothin'.

X-Ray tries to clean his dirty glasses on his dirty uniform.

ARMPIT
See, look at the little fishy.

Stanley watches Pendanski fill his canteen.

STANLEY
I guess this really was a lake once.

PENDANSKI
Biggest lake in Texas. There was a town too. The warden's grandfather owned the lake and half the town.

As the water fills Stanley's canteen, he stares out across the dry lake bed to the mountain range in the distance.

MORPH TO:

57 EXT. GREEN LAKE - MIDDLE OF THE LAKE - 1899 - DAY 57

A pristine lake sparkles like an emerald at the base of the same mountain range. Peach trees in bloom dot the shore.

THE POSTCARD COMES TO LIFE as one of the first motorboats ever built moves across the lake, ugly black smoke spewing from its crude and noisy engine. It's full of rowdy BOYS and MEN. TROUT WALKER, 30, steers the boat toward the shore.

58 EXT. GREEN LAKE - LAKEFRONT - 1899 - DAY 58 *

The shore is lush and green, the peach trees are covered in blossoms. A Fourth of July picnic in full swing.

SAM (O.S.)
Onions! Get your onions here folks! God's own chosen vegetable!

SAM, a charismatic black man (we met at the beginning of our story) stands with his donkey, MARY LOU, who pulls a cart full of onions. Above the onions, a shelf full of odd-shaped medicine bottles.

A very pretty young woman, MISS KATHERINE, turns to the sound of his voice. We realize we've met her before. Is this Kissin' Kate Barlow? She seems so sweet and innocent.

As children run toward Sam's cart, Katherine follows. The children clamor to pet the donkey, people gather around.

Sam offers an onion to a little red-headed girl, LINDA, 10, takes it and holds it out to the donkey. She giggles as Mary Lou eats it out of her hand.

SAM (CONT'D)
The ancient Egyptians knew the onion's potent juices could cure lung disease, stomach sickness, baldness, hemorrhoids...if you don't believe me, ask Mary Lou...

Mary Lou lets out a snort and all the children squeal with delight.

The low rumbling sound from out on the lake grows louder and louder. Katherine and everyone else turn to watch as, Trout Walker steers his motorboat toward the shore. Trout sees Katherine looking at him and waves. As his buddies nudge him, Katherine frowns and looks away.

SAM (CONT'D)
All she eats is onions. And she's almost 100 years old! *

Katherine's frown turns into a smile.

MISS KATHERINE
How would you know, Sam! You're only 25!

Sam winks at her, then hands a bottle to a couple standing close together.

SAM
Because it's nature's magic vegetable. Just rub it on his head, every night, Mrs. Collingwood.

All laugh, even Mr. Collingwood, a good-looking man who's going bald.

The BOOTS of a dead partner stick ominously out the back of a horse drawn cart which stops nearby. A grizzled prospector climbs down and yells to his other partner.

PROSPECTOR
You just hold the horses, I don't care how much gold is out there. I ain't goin' back without this guy's lizard juice.

He approaches Sam, now in the midst of selling his onion medicine to the TOWN DOCTOR.

Trout Walker strides past, smiling and nodding to various people. As he stops to stare at Katherine, TWO MORE FRIENDS, scruffy wannabees, join his entourage.

FRIEND ONE
Hey, Trout.

FRIEND TWO
How ya doin', Trout?

Trout ignores them, choosing instead to nod to the local SHERIFF, who stands nearby eating a bratwurst and downing a beer.

TROUT
Sheriff.

SHERIFF
Good afternoon, Mr. Walker. Just in time for the excitement.

Across the way is a table with various foods; half-eaten pies, jams, pickles. The MAYOR, his shirt splattered with food stains, calls to the crowd.

MAYOR
Ladies and gentleman!
(holds a blue-ribbon jar)
First prize goes to Miss Katherine Barlow! For her delicious spiced peaches.

Applause as demure Miss Katherine makes her way to the Mayor.

MAYOR (CONT'D)
Sometimes I think Green Lake, Texas must be Heaven On Earth, because these peaches are the work of an angel.

MISS KATHERINE
Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Little Linda, the red-headed girl, jumps up and down with delight, pulling her haggard mother's hand.

LINDA
That's my teacher!

Trout Walker leers at the pretty school teacher.

TROUT WALKER
I'd like to take a bite out of her peaches.

The Sheriff and the others laugh as, behind Trout, the blue water of the lake dissolves to dirt.

59 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 59

CLOSE ON X-Ray as he stares down at Stanley in his hole.

X-RAY
That was some lame crap you pulled.

Stanley stops digging and looks up at X-Ray, confused.

STANLEY
What? When?

X-RAY
Listen. You ever find anything, you give it to me, understand?

Stanley doesn't know what to say.

X-RAY (CONT'D)
You're new here, right? I've been here for over six months and never found anything. My eyesight's not so good. You know why my name's X-Ray? It's Pig Latin for Rex. That's all. I'm too blind to find anything...

Stanley doesn't know what to say.

X-RAY (CONT'D)
I mean, why should you get a day off, when you just got here? You understand what I'm sayin'? That's only fair, right?

Stanley nods.

STANLEY
Right.

X-Ray's anger fades completely into a smile.

X-RAY
All right!

He walks off to his own hole. Stanley looks frustrated, as he starts to dig again.

MUSIC BLARES

60 EXT. CAMP - WRECK ROOM - EVENING 60

Stanley stands before a homemade sign: "WRECK ROOM" which hangs on a door to a building. Obnoxious MUSIC comes from inside.

61 INT. CAMP - WRECK ROOM - EVENING 61

Everything's a wreck, including the BOYS sprawled across the broken furniture. The music comes from a BOOM BOX.

X-Ray and Armpit are playing pool The faded brown felt on the table is pitted and torn. X-Ray sinks a shot.

ARMPIT
You'd never win on a normal table. You use all the warps.

X-Ray smiles.

X-RAY
You use what you got.

Stanley and makes his way across the room. He trips over the outstretched leg of the Lump, the second toughest kid in camp.

LUMP
Watch it.

STANLEY
(too tired to care)
You watch it.

LUMP
What'd you say?

Stanley backs into the BOOM BOX knocking it over. The music abruptly stops.

The room becomes deathly quiet as Lump rises. All eyes turn on him and Stanley.

LUMP(CONT'D)
You're dead.

X-Ray and Armpit make their way to Stanley's side.

X-RAY
Just fade. You don't want to mess with the Caveman.

Zero watches the confrontation. He picks up a ball from the pool table-- a weapon.

X-Ray sets the boom box upright. He presses a button and the music starts. Lump is still staring bullets at Stanley, as Armpit ushers Stanley away. Zero sets the ball back down. *

Armpit and Stanley join Magnet and Squid who sit on a ragged couch. Zigzag is on the floor, his face less then two feet away from an old TV which broadcasts nothing but static. *

ARMPIT
You see Caveman back there?

MAGNET
The Caveman is one tough Hombre.

X-Ray joins them.

X-RAY
(to Stanley)
You got to be careful who you bump into. Those guys from A-tent are crazy.

ANGLE ON Lump jivin' to the music.

SQUID
If he had been one week older, they would have sent him to Huntsville.

X-RAY
Whatcha watchin, Ziggy?

ZIGZAG
I Dream Of Jeanie.

X-Ray playfully grabs Zigzag by the back of the neck.

X-RAY
Yeah, keep on dreamin'.

A horn BLARES. The music stops and everyone files out.

ARMPIT
C'mon, Caveman, let's go eat.

X-RAY
(to Stanley)
You comin', Caveman?

Stanley looks at X-Ray, confused. But when X-Ray motions for him to follow, he realizes that HE IS CAVEMAN! As he leaves, he passes Zero.

ZERO
It's better than "Barf Bag."

62 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 62

The boys are lined up behind the water truck, in their prescribed order. X-Ray moves Stanley ahead of Zero.

X-RAY
You're here now, Caveman.

Stanley looks apologetically at Zero, as he takes his place in front of him.

PENDANSKI (V.O.)
What about you, Jose? What do you want to do with your life?

63 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - NIGHT 63

All the boys except Stanley are seated in a half-circle facing Pendanski.

MAGNET
I dunno, Mom.

PENDANSKI
It's important to have a goal. Otherwise you're going to end up right back here, or someplace worse. What do you like?

MAGNET
I like animals.

X-RAY
(with a laugh)
That's what got Magnet sent here in the first place!

MAGNET
Yeah, I would a made it if my pocket didn't start barking.

The boys laugh.

MAGNET (CONT'D)
It's criminal the way they keep those little doggies locked up in cages.

MR. PENDANSKI
No, Jose, what you did, was criminal.

MAGNET
They wanted a thousand bucks for just one puppy!

PENDANSKI
All right, let's try to think of a positive way Jose can use his love for animals.

Laughter.

ZIGZAG
He could work in a zoo.

PENDANSKI
Very good, Ricky.

ARMPIT
He belongs in a zoo.

PENDANSKI
How about you, Theodore? Any ideas for Jose?

Armpit shrugs.

PENDANSKI (CONT'D)
Think, Theodore. Use that mind of yours.

ARMPIT
Animal trainer. Like for the movies.

Muffled laughs from X-Ray and Squid.

PENDANSKI
Fantastic! What do you think, Jose?

MAGNET
I think it would be fun to train monkeys for the movies.

X-Ray bursts with laughter.

PENDANSKI
Rex, we don't laugh at people's dreams.

MAGNET
I don't *dream* about monkeys.

Stanley enters, exhausted.

PENDANSKI
Stanley, come join our circle.

Stanley plops down. Squid pretends to look at a watch.

ARMPIT
Eight hours. You're getting fast, Caveman.

Laughter.

PENDANSKI
Alan, please tell Stanley what we've been discussing.

SQUID
Sure. Magnet's been having wet dreams about monkeys.

Laughter.

PENDANSKI
We're figuring out what we want to do with our lives when we leave Camp Green Lake and join the rest of society.

X-RAY
Hey, that's great, Mom. They finally gonna let you outta here?

The boys crack up.

PENDANSKI
You only get one life, and so far you've all done a good job of screwing it up. So you're Caveman, now. Well, let me tell you something, Caveman. You are here on account of one person. You know who that person is?

STANLEY
Yeah, my no good dirty rotten pig stealin' great-great grandfather.

Howls of laughter. Armpit high-fives Stanley.

PENDANSKI
No, YOU screwed up your life, and it's up to you to fix it. It's not going to be easy, but you'll be surprised what you can accomplish once you set your mind to it. Even Zero isn't completely worthless. What about it, Zero? What do you like to do?

Zero stares long and hard at Pendanski.

ZERO
I like to dig holes.

Pendanski stares back. The hate is mutual.

ZIGZAG
(giggles)
You think Zero will ever get to do that?

64 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 64

The boys all stand in their holes looking upward, where one cloud hangs in the sky.

X-RAY
If it'll just move in front of the sun, we can have some shade.

ZIGZAG
C'mon lil' cloud. You can do it.

STANLEY
The Warden owns the shade.

Stanley goes back to work. Suddenly, his shovel strikes something hard. He unearths a bright white rock the size of a bowling ball. He heaves it outside his hole and continues to dig.

But when he throws a shovelful of dirt on top of the rock, he hears a small CLINK. He takes a beat, then climbs out of his hole, sifts through the dirt, and discovers a GOLD TUBE, glinting in the sun.

He cleans it off with water from his canteen. Engraved at the bottom are the letters K.B. with a heart around them. He looks at X-Ray, digging, then at the Warden's cabin, far across the field of holes. Looking again at X-Ray, he rolls the tube in the palm of his hand.

MAGNET (O.S)
Whatcha got there, Stanley?

Stanley, startled, moves quickly now towards X-Ray.

STANLEY
Hey, X! I think I mighta found something.

X-Ray stops digging and climbs up to him. Wipes his glasses and squints closely at Stanley's outstretched palm.

X-RAY
Looks like an old shotgun shell.

The other boys-- except Zero-- gather around.

SQUID
Too long and thin to be a shotgun shell.

STANLEY
There are some letters at the bottom. K.B.

X-Ray takes off his dirty glasses, wipes them on his uniform, and puts them back on. He still can't see.

MAGNET
K.B?

ZIGZAG
Keith Berringer.

ARMPIT
Who's that?

ZIGZAG
He was in my math class.

MAGNET
(shoves Zig)
Good thinkin' Zigzag. It must belong to him.

X-RAY
Well, I'll show it to Mom. Who knows? Maybe I'll get the rest of the day off.

Stanley hesitates, stung by the unfairness of it all.

STANLEY
But your hole's almost dug. I'm going to be out here another two hours.

X-RAY
Yeah, so?

Stanley recovers.

STANLEY
So why don't you wait until tomorrow morning to show it to Mom. Then you'll get the whole day off.

X-Ray smiles.

X-RAY
Right on. You're pretty smart, Caveman...

MAGNET
Oh, man. The cloud's gone.

A blazing sun in a cloudless sky. TILT DOWN TO -

65 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 65

Stanley is the only one still digging. He looks at the LANDMARK ROCK - now at eye level. The holes and knobs in the rock resemble a face.

The rock DISSOLVES into the face of Derrick, the school bully.

66 INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY 66

As before, Stanley is getting his books from his locker when Derrick steals his binder. But this is Stanley's fantasy. As Derrick taunts Stanley, he backs right into... Armpit, standing shirtless, even at school. Derrick trembles with fear, as he finds himself surrounded by all the boys from D-tent.

X-RAY
Caveman's cool.

DERRICK
S-s-sorry. Here Stanley, I mean, Caveman. You dropped this. I was just picking it up for him.

Squid slams his fist into Bully's face. On the moment of impact CUT TO:

67 EXT. DIGGING AREA - MORNING 67

Stanley slams his shovel into the dirt.

ANGLE ON LANDMARK ROCK as DAY FADES TO NIGHT, then SUNRISE.

The TIRES of the pick-up rumble past the landmark rock.

PULL BACK to see the boys digging in another area, far away from the landmark rock. The truck stops near them, and the boys line up. Stanley is now fourth in line.

Pendanski fills X-Ray's canteen and hands it to him, along with his breakfast. X-Ray returns to his hole and starts to dig.

Pendanski gives Armpit his canteen and breakfast, and starts filling Squid's canteen.

X-RAY (O.C.)
Hey, Mom! I think I found something!

The GOLD TUBE is sticking out of some dirt on X-Ray's shovel.

Pendanski comes over followed by the boys. He takes the tube off the shovel, examines it, then unlatches the walkie-talkie from the belt.

PENDANSKI
(into walkie-talkie)
Hey, Lou. We got somethin' here I think you oughta see.

ANGLE ON WARDEN'S CABIN.

The CHRYSLER pulls away and roars towards the dig site, expertly maneuvering between the holes as it approaches the boys. They stand motionless as the car pulls to a stop.

The door opens. WE SEE a black cowboy boot, studded with turquoise, step out of the driver's door.

TILT UP to reveal what feels like TEN FEET OF LEGS, and then, THE WARDEN, a shapely red-headed WOMAN in tight, faded jeans and a weathered straw cowboy hat. The boys stare in silence as she strides past them to X-Ray, waiting in his hole. Stanley's eyes follow here, his mouth open.

Mr. Sir slides out of the passenger seat and wanders around the site, inspecting the holes.

WARDEN
Is this where you found it?

X-RAY
Yes, Ma'am.

WARDEN
(to Pendanski)
Drive X-Ray back to camp. Let him take a double shower. Give him clean clothes, and a snack. But first fill everyone's canteen.

PENDANSKI
I just filled them.

WARDEN
Excuse me?

PENDANSKI
I filled them right before-

WARDEN
Did I ask you when you last filled them?

PENDANSKI
No, but there's no reason to--

WARDEN
Excuse me?

Pendanski stops talking.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
These fine boys have been working hard. Don't you think it just might be possible they've taken a drink after you filled their canteens?

Pendanski says nothing.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Caveman, will you come here please?

Stanley flinches, then goes to her.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Mr. Pendanski and I have been having a discussion. Did you take a drink after he filled your canteen?

STANLEY
I still got plenty left.

WARDEN
Excuse me?

STANLEY
Yeah, I drank some.

The Warden takes his canteen, and gives it to Pendanski.

WARDEN
Fill it. If that's too much trouble, you can grab a shovel, and Caveman can fill the canteens.

As Pendanski heads to the water truck, the Warden moves to pull a pitchfork from the trunk of her Chrysler.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Armpit, and Squid. Get the wheel barrows out of the truck. Zero, you take over X-Ray's hole. Caveman will assist you. We're going to dig the dirt twice.

Pendanski throws Stanley his canteen as the truck drives by with X-Ray in the passenger seat. He's sitting back and waving like a king.

DISSOLVE TO:

68 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 68

Zero dumps a shovelful of dirt on a pile. Stanley digs into that same pile, and dumps the dirt into a wheel barrow. The same procedure is being followed by Armpit and Magnet, Squid and Zigzag.

The Warden paces around the boys, who now work at a feverish pace. She uses her pitchfork to sift through the dirt piles.

MR. SIR
When the wheelbarrow is full, be sure to dump it far away from this area. We don't want any dirt piles getting in the way.

Stanley pushes his wheelbarrow past the LANDMARK ROCK. He glances at the hole beside it, then continues on towards the Warden.

The Warden paces around the diggers.

WARDEN
You're doing fine. No hurry. We don't want to miss anything.

69 EXT. DIGGING AREA - LATE AFTERNOON 69

Worn-out, the boys head back to camp together.

STANLEY
How'd she know our names?

ZIGZAG
I think she watches us all the time.

(MORE)

ZIGZAG (cont'd)
She's got these tiny cameras and microphones hidden all around the camp; in the tents, the wreck room, the shower.

STANLEY
The shower?

MAGNET
Quit bumpin' your gums, Zigzag, you paranoid, psychotic freak.

Zigzag reaches out to grab Magnet, then thinks better of it, and lets him go.

ZIGZAG
You think I'm paranoid. Then let me hear you say, the Warden is a...

He whispers something in his ear.

ZIGZAG (CONT'D)
C'mon, say it out loud, if you don't think the warden's listening.

All eyes are now on Magnet.

MAGNET
The Warden is a-- I'm not saying it.

Armpit and Squid laugh.

ARMPIT
How could she hide a microphone out here?

MAGNET
Then you say it.

ARMPIT
I ain't sayin' it.

70 INT. CAMP - WRECK ROOM - DAY 70

X-Ray, wearing a remarkably clean uniform, is shooting pool with the Monk and Lump. He looks up as his boys from D-TENT enter, wasted. The boys plop down in their usual places.

X-RAY
The team is back! Whassa matter? You tired or something?

Stanley enters, last.

X-RAY (cont'd)
(laughs)
Hey, my man, Caveman!

Zigzag turns on the TV and stares at the static. Armpit takes a knob off the TV set, and with a mischievous grin, shows it to Squid.

71 INT. CAMP - SHOWERS - DAY 71

As the shower slows to a stop, Stanley looks around, nervously.

SOUND OF RAIN hitting a roof.

MISS KATHERINE(V.O.)
Okay, children! Let's call it a day now.

72 EXT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - DAY 72

Rain falls on the old, one room school house. TILT DOWN TO:

Miss Katherine ushers the last of the children safely out the door, helping cover their heads with jackets and bookbags, as SAM mounts the steps of the schoolhouse. His onion cart and Mary Lou stand nearby under the shelter of trees.

SAM
Something wrong, Miss Katherine?

MISS KATHERINE
Oh, not really...it's just that this old school house leaks.

Sam moves inside, staring up.

74 INT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - DAY 74

CLOSE ON - A large discolored section of the ceiling threatens to burst. Buckets catching leaks are everywhere.

Miss Katherine hurries to her desk pushing books and papers away from the splattering as Sam strolls around the room, staring up at the leaky spots.

SAM
I can fix that.

MISS KATHERINE
(laughing)
Oh, Sam. Are you gonna tell me onions can cure a leaky roof, too?!

SAM
(laughs with her)
Na, I'm just good with my hands. I built my boat. I need it to get across the lake to my onion field, so I'd be in big trouble if it leaked.

MISS KATHERINE
Is it really true the water runs uphill at your onion field, Sam?

SAM
(another wink)
It certainly is, Miss Katherine. You can trust me on that one. And I tell you what else. I'll fix the roof in exchange for five jars of your spiced peaches.

MISS KATHERINE
You're on.

She holds out her hand to Sam. He shakes it.

75 EXT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - DAY 75

Sam is patching the roof, silhouetted against the sky.

MAN (V.O.)
The... duck... swims... on the ...lake.

76 INT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - NIGHT 76

Adult night school is in progress. The school house is full of farmers and workmen, most of whom seem eager and attentive.

Except Trout Walker, who smirks as THE MAN WHO WAS READING sits down. "The duck swims on the lake" is written on the blackboard.

MISS KATHERINE
Mister Walker. Can you tell us which of those words is the verb.

TROUT
(smug)
No.

MISS KATHERINE
Will you read the sentence, please.

TROUT
Nope.

His BUDDIES laugh.

TROUT (CONT'D)
The duck may swim on the lake. But my daddy owns the lake.

MISS KATHERINE
If you're not here to learn, why are you here?

He takes a long look at her.

TROUT
Why do you think?

77 EXT. DIGGING AREA - EARLY MORNING 77

The Warden supervises as the entire camp works this site. She paces with her pitch fork, as she watches alongside Mr. Sir and Pendanski.

WARDEN
Glad to have you back, X-Ray. We can use your sharp eyes. The holes are deep enough. Today we're going make them wider.

Stanley fills the wheel barrow and starts to take it away. Zero digs. Armpit fishes something out of his pocket.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
(quietly, to Sir and Pendanski)
Today's the day. I can feel it.

ARMPIT
I found something!

He climbs up out of one of the holes. He holds out the knob from the TV set.

The Warden eagerly takes it from him. Everyone watches, as she studies the knob.

WARDEN
Are you trying to be funny, or do you just think I'm stupid?

Armpit doesn't know what to say.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Excuse me?

She hands the knob to Mr. Sir, who examines it closely.

ARMPIT
(blunders)
I wasn't trying to be funny.

MR. SIR
Well, Armpit, your little joke just cost you a week of shower privileges.

The boys all moan and groan.

MAGNET
Why should we be punished, just because Arm--

A look from Mr. Sir shuts him up. The Warden slams her pitchfork into the ground.

WARDEN
Everyone back to work.

The boys resume digging - furiously.

78 INT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - DAY 78

Six jars of peaches sit next to Katherine, who's sitting on top of her desk. Sam stand next to her, smiling.

SAM
If there's anything else...

MISS KATHERINE
Well since you mention it, the windows won't open. The children and I would enjoy a breeze now and then.

SAM
I can fix that.

79 INT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - DAY 79

SAM is fixing the window. Katherine sits reading at her desk. They are alone in the schoolhouse.

SAM
What are you reading?

Katherine reads aloud.

MISS KATHERINE
I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved -

SAM
- with a love that was more than
love, I and my Annabel Lee.

Katherine beams at Sam, who smiles and opens the refurbished window.

MISS KATHERINE
You know, Sam. The door doesn't
hang straight.

SAM
I can fix that.

80 EXT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - NIGHT 80

SAM is hanging the door.

TROUT WALKER (O.C.)
How about a picnic this Saturday.

81 INT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - NIGHT 81

TROUT WALKER is sitting on Miss Katherine's desk like he owns it.

TROUT WALKER
We can take a ride on my motor
boat.

Katherine is gathering her things.

MISS KATHERINE
No thank you, Mr. Walker.

She looks at Sam, who looks back at her.

TROUT WALKER
C'mon. No one ever says no to
Trout Walker.

MISS KATHERINE
I believe I just did.

82 EXT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - EVENING 82

Sam finishes adjusting a swing he's draped from a sturdy tree then moves to Katherine who stands nearby, beaming at him.

They stand together, staring at the school house, all fixed up. It gleams like a jewel.

MISS KATHERINE
Sam, this is the finest school house in all of Texas. Thank you.

Their handshake lingers a little longer than necessary.

83 EXT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - EVENING 83

IT'S RAINING.

84 INT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - EVENING 84

Miss Katherine is alone at her desk, a book opened in front of her.

ANGLE ON BOOK: A drop of water splatters the page.

But the ceiling isn't leaking. The teacher is crying.

SAM (O.C.)
Is everything all right?

Katherine looks up. Sam's in the doorway.

MISS KATHERINE
No. My heart is breaking.

Sam moves to her. A pause. Then -

SAM
I can fix that.

He puts his arms around her and they share a long kiss.

84A EXT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - EVENING 84A

Trout Walker appears on horseback and stares through the doorway of the schoolhouse, enraged.

85 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 85

The Warden glares, her eyes ablaze with anger, highlighted by the light of lanterns posted around the dig site on poles and boulders.

WARDEN
Four days! Four days, and this is all you got to show for it.

Magnet is peeing into a hole. He looks back over his shoulder at the commotion.

Exhausted, all the boys are now working in very close quarters in A GIANT HOLE. Shovels swing dangerously about. The Warden, Mr. Sir, Pendanski, and OTHER COUNSELORS supervise from above.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
(to a counselor)
If you can't get them to dig any faster, you can grab a shovel and join them.

MR. SIR
Stop dawdling, boys! This isn't girl scout camp.

Everyone works harder and faster. As Stanley brings up a shovelful of dirt, Squid's shovel accidentally smashes into the side of Stanley's head, knocking him to the ground. The dirt from Stanley's shovel falls at Zigzag's feet.

From Stanley's P.O.V. Zigzag's face, blurry at first, comes into focus.

ZIGZAG
That's your dirt. I'm not digging up your dirt.

Stanley, dizzy, struggles to his feet. He has a gash under his right ear. He looks at a small pile of dirt near where his shovel had lain. He digs his shovel under it and tosses it out of the hole.

ZIGZAG (CONT'D)
Okay then.

Zigzag now digs his shovel into the dirt, under where Stanley's dirt had been.

Magnet walks slowly to the big hole. The Warden stops him.

WARDEN
And where have you been?

MAGNET
I had to, you know, go.

The warden jabs him with her pitchfork. He falls backward into the big hole. There are three holes in his shirt, and three circles of blood. The other boys help him up.

WARDEN
(to Pendanski)
You're giving these boys too much water.

The Warden storms off towards the idling Chrysler.

86 INT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - 1899 - NIGHT 86

Miss Katherine is grading papers by lantern light.

Trout Walker bursts in with an angry mob carrying torches. They begin piling books, desks and bookcases in the center of the room.

MISS KATHERINE
Stop! What do you think you're doing?

MOB MAN
You ain't teachin' our kids no more, lady.

The man pushes her. She stumbles backwards. Trout grabs her. She elbows him in the face and races out the door.

87 INT. GREEN LAKE - SHERIFF'S OFFICE - 1899 - NIGHT 87

The Sherrif is leaning back at his desk as Katherine bursts in. A bottle of whiskey sits open on his desk.

MISS KATHERINE
Sheriff, they're destroying the school!

The sheriff rises and moves towards her.

SHERIFF
Give me a kiss.

He grabs Katherine. She tries to pull free, but he won't let go.

SHERIFF (cont'd)
You kissed the onion picker.

MISS KATHERINE
You're drunk!

SHERIFF
I always get drunk before a hanging.

She stops struggling and stares at him, understanding now. She's horrified.

MISS KATHERINE
Well then, you'll have to hang me, too. Because I kissed him back!

SHERIFF
It ain't against the law for you to kiss him. Just for him to kiss you.

Katherine breaks free, and runs out of his office.

88 EXT. GREEN LAKE - LAKEFRONT - 1899 - NIGHT 88

Sam is moving fast from the edge of the lake towards the smoke coming from the school house. He is stopped by Katherine coming the other way.

MISS KATHERINE
Don't even think about it, Sam.

Sam hesitates and looks towards the school, confused. Katherine grabs his arm, pulling him towards the boat.

MISS KATHERINE (CONT'D)
They're lookin' for you...

89 INT. GREEN LAKE - MIDDLE OF THE LAKE- 1899 - NIGHT 89

The moon is full. Sam is rowing, angrily. They are in the middle of the lake. Katherine looks back towards shore.

The SOUND OF A MOTOR, faint at first, getting louder.

Trout's motor boat is barreling across the lake. Aboard are the MEN from school house along with the Mayor and the Sheriff. All have guns.

-- Sam rows hard, but he's no match for Trout's boat.
-- Trout Walker's boat rams into Sam's boat, capsizing it.
-- Sam goes under.
-- The sheriff shoots.
-- The water swirls with blood.
-- The men haul a struggling Katherine onto the motorboat.

89A EXT. GREEN LAKE - UNDER WATER - NIGHT 89A

A beautifully crafted cabinet door pops open. Jars of Katherine's peaches tumble in slow motion to the lower side of the boat as it sinks.

90 EXT. GREEN LAKE - MIDDLE OF THE LAKE - 1899 - NIGHT 90

PAN across lake to town. Mary Lou's body lies on the shore, shot dead. In the distance, the schoolhouse is in flames.

DISSOLVE TO:

91 EXT. GREEN LAKE - SCHOOL HOUSE - PRESENT - DAY 91

A few charred remnants are all that remains of the school.

PAN ACROSS TO:

92 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 92

A SEA OF HOLES. WE HEAR POOL BALLS COLLIDE.

93 INT. CAMP - WRECK ROOM - EVENING 93

Pendanski walks past Magnet and X-Ray playing pool and goes to the other D-tent boys. Zigzag watches the static-filled TV. Stanley has an ugly wound beneath his ear.

PENDANSKI
Stanley.

STANLEY
My name's Caveman.

PENDANSKI
Well I've got a letter here for someone named Stanley Yelnats. It doesn't say Caveman anywhere.

Stanley takes the letter. Pendanski leaves.

SQUID
Your mother? I bet she used to help you with your homework, too!

ARMPIT
(to Squid)
So, when did you ever do homework?

ZIGZAG
When did you ever go to school?

SQUID
Well, when I wasn't bustin' into houses.

Stanley puts the letter in his pocket.

94 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - EVENING 94

Zero watches Stanley read his letter from home.

STANLEY'S MOTHER (V.O.)
...your letters make me feel like one of the other moms who can afford to send their kids to summer camp. I know it's not the same, but I'm very proud of you for trying to make the best of a bad situation.

95 INT. YELNATS CRUMMY APARTMENT - DAY 95

THE LANDLORD is yelling at Stanley's father, and pointing at a pile of old sneakers. Stanley's Mother sits at the kitchen table, writing a letter.

STANLEY'S MOTHER (V.O.)
Your father thinks he's real close to a breakthrough. I hope so. The landlord is threatening to evict us because of the odor.

96 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - EVENING 96

STANLEY'S MOTHER (V.O.)
I feel so sorry for...

Stanley stops reading and turns to ZERO, behind him.

STANLEY
I don't like it when you read over my shoulder, okay.

ZERO
I can't read.

Stanley stares at Zero.

STANLEY
Really? Jeez...

Stanley, returning to his letter, laughs.

ZERO
What are you laughin' at?

STANLEY
Something my mom wrote - she said she feels sorry for the little old lady who lived in a shoe-- because it must have smelled really bad.

Zero stares at him blankly.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
You know, the nursery rhyme?

ZERO
Can you teach me?

STANLEY
The nursery rhyme?

ZERO
To read and write.

Stanley stares.

STANLEY
I don't know how to teach, man. After digging all day, I just need to chill.

Stanley gets up and leaves the tent.

97 EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - EVENING 97

X-Ray, Squid, Armpit and Magnet are heading to the mess hall. Stanley hurries to catch up. As they wait for him. Armpit stretches, the other boys retch, scream and pretend to die.

98 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - EVENING 98

Camera pans through the empty tent. The sound of the boys in the camp echo outside. Zero sits alone.

99 INT. GREEN LAKE - SHERIFF'S OFFICE - 1899 - MORNING 99

MISS KATHERINE (O.C.)
Mornin' Sheriff.

The Sheriff drinking a cup of coffee at his desk, suddenly looks up.

Miss Katherine looks very sexy with her two top buttons unbuttoned. Her lips are painted bright red. She holds her hand coquettishly behind her back.

MISS KATHERINE (CONT'D)
You still want that kiss?

The sheriff smiles, then his face fills with fear. BANG! He falls back, dead.

Miss Katherine kisses his cheek, leaving her mark. And walks out.

100 EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - BEFORE DAWN 100

Mr. Sir supervises the handing out of shovels. Stanley hands X-Ray his special shovel, and takes one for himself.

MR. SIR
After the behavior exhibited over the past several days, The Warden and I have decided your character building would be best served by returning to the digging of individual holes.

Stanley and X-Ray move out, joining Squid and Armpit on their way to the digging area.

SQUID
You think the Warden and Mr. Sir are getting it on?

ARMPIT
No. I think the Warden's getting it on with Pendanski.

MAGNET
Pendanski! You're loco.

X-RAY
I think Sir's getting it on with Pendanski.

Laughter.

DISSOLVE TO:

101 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 101

As Mr. Sir is filling X-Ray's canteen, X-Ray watches to make sure the boys are lining up right.

Suddenly, a FLASH OF LIGHTENING illuminates a mountain peak in the distance. A CRACK OF THUNDER, far away but loud.

X-Ray squints. Stanley sees it clearly. The mountain peak resembles a BIG THUMB.

MR. SIR
Don't get your hopes up. The storms never make it past the mountains.

ZIGZAG
Maybe this time it'll be different, it'll blow this way. Fill up the whole lake.

X-RAY
Yeah, man, forty days and forty nights. Better start building an ark, Zig, and round up two of each kind of animal.

ZIGZAG
Cool. Two rattlesnakes. Two scorpions.

SQUID
Yeah, and two yellow spotted lizards.

As some of the boys move back to their holes, Stanley continues to stare at the distant peak. It really does look like a fist with the thumb sticking up. Mr. Sir fills Zero's canteen, Stanley's hand slowly forms the same shape.

STANLEY(V.O.)
But Grandpa, how did he survive?

102 EXT. TEXAS RUGGED TERRAIN - 1905 - DAY 102

Stanley-the-First begins to make his way from the overturned stagecoach across the desert towards a distant mountain range on the horizon. One mountain peak resembles a BIG THUMB.

GRANDFATHER (V.O.)
Said he found refuge on God's Thumb

103 INT. YELNATS CRUMMY APT - KITCHEN - DAY 103

Stanley and his Grandfather are deep in conversation.

STANLEY
What is God's Thumb?

GRANDFATHER
(shakes his head)
Who knows? He was half-crazy when they found him.

104 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 104

The lightening strikes again. Thunder cracks. All the boys stop digging and look up once more. Stanley's staring at what looks like lightening coming out of the hand of god.

Mr. Sir is driving away in the water truck. *

MAGNET
Anybody want any sunflower seeds?

Magnet stands near where the truck had been, holding something behind his back.

As Stanley moves back to his hole Magnet holds up the sack.

ARMPIT
All right, Magnet!

X-RAY
My man!

MAGNET
I can't help it. My fingers are little magnets.

Magnet tosses the sack to X-Ray who takes a handful and tosses it to Armpit. Armpit grabs a handful and tosses the sack to Squid.

Zero continues to dig, ignoring the fuss. *

Zigzag throws the sack to Stanley. He tries to catch it, but * it opens just as it reaches him and all the seeds spill out into his hole. *

STANLEY
Sorry, guys.

As Stanley tries to scoop the seeds back into the sack, all * the boys notice the truck is turning around. Deep in his * hole, Stanley quickly tries to bury the evidence. WE HEAR the truck door slam.

MR. SIR (O.C.)
You girl scouts having a good time?

WE SEE MR. SIR'S BOOTS as he walks towards Stanley's hole.

The sack is almost buried, but not quite.

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
Well, Stanley, how'd that get there. Did it fall from the sky?

Magnet, and the others, watch anxiously. Stanley picks up the empty sack.

STANLEY
I stole it from your truck, Mr. Sir.

MR. SIR
Oh, you did.

STANLEY
Yes, Mr. Sir.

MR. SIR
And what happened to all the seeds?

STANLEY
I ate them.

MR. SIR
All by yourself?

STANLEY
Yes, Mr. Sir.

MAGNET
That's cold, Caveman.

X-RAY
Yeah, how come you didn't share any with us? We thought you were our friend.

105 EXT. WARDEN'S CABIN - DAY 105

CLOSE ON Mr. Sir's fist, pounding on cabin door.

Mr. Sir and Stanley wait outside the Warden's cabin. Irregular holes surround it. The Warden opens the door.

MR. SIR
Caveman found something. He's wondering if you might give him the day off.

WARDEN
(eagerly)
What is it? What'd you find?

MR. SIR
Show her, Caveman.

Stanley holds up the empty sack. Mr. Sir smiles sadistically.

WARDEN
(her anger boils)
Come in. You're letting the cold out.

105A INT. CAMP - WARDEN'S CABIN - DAY 105A

The old cabin has been refurbished. Stanley, Mr. Sir, and the Warden stand by a stone fireplace.

MR. SIR
Tell her.

STANLEY
While Mr. Sir was filling the canteens, I snuck into his truck and stole his sack of sunflower seeds.

WARDEN
I see.
(beat)
Caveman, will you bring me that small flowered case on the chest over there, please?

Stanley follows her point to an antique hutch across the room. Above it, there's a framed newspaper on a wall. The headline reads: KISSING KATE BARLOW ROBS CHICAGO PACIFIC.

A flowered MAKE-UP CASE sits on the hutch. STANLEY retrieves the case and brings it to the Warden, who moves to sit on the couch. She motions for him to sit next to her, which he does. She opens the case, removes a bottle of nail polish, and carefully begins applying it.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
You see this, Caveman. This is my special nail polish. I make it myself. Do you want to know my secret ingredient? Rattlesnake venom.

(MORE)

WARDEN (CONT'D)
I love what it does to the color, and it's perfectly harmless... when it's dry.

She finishes painting her nails.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
So you think he stole your sunflower seeds?

She runs her wet nails down Stanley's face. She barely touches the wound behind his ear, causing him to recoil.

MR. SIR
No, I don't. I think he's covering up for X-Ray or somebody. It was a ten pound sack and he claims to have eaten them all by himself.

STANLEY
The sack wasn't full. And I spilled a lot. You can check my hole.

The Warden rises, and WHACK! strikes Mr. Sir across the face.

He stares at her a moment. Deep scratches streak his cheek. Then he screams, grabs his face and drops to the floor.

WARDEN
I don't particularly care about your sunflower seeds.

Mr. Sir moans.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
I liked you better when you smoked.

Mr. Sir takes a deep breath, and screams again, worse than before.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
(to Stanley)
I suggest you go back to your hole now.

Stanley starts to leave, but Mr. Sir is sprawled in his way, the muscles on his face twitching. Stanley cautiously steps over him.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
He's not going to die.
Unfortunately for you.

108 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 108

The boys stop digging as Stanley approaches.

SQUID
Man, we thought you were dead!

Stanley makes a beeline for his hole.

MAGNET
What'd you say?

STANLEY
That I took the sack from Mr. Sir's truck.

X-RAY
What'd she do to you?

STANLEY
Nothing. She just.... Look, I got a lot of digging to make up. I don't want to be here alone, when Mr. Sir--

He stops as he looks at his hole. It's completely dug.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
Hey, thanks guys.

MAGNET
Don't look at us.

Confused, Stanley looks around. Zero is digging. His hole is less than half done.

ZIGZAG
He likes to dig holes.

SQUID
I think he eats the dirt.

The other boys go back to their digging as Stanley crouches down beside Zero's hole. Zero, dirty and worn out, looks up at him.

STANLEY
(quietly)
Why'd you dig my hole?

ZERO
You didn't steal the sunflower seeds.

STANLEY
So, neither did you.

ZERO
You didn't steal the shoes.

Stanley considers Zero's comment as Zero returns to digging.

STANLEY
You still want to learn to read?

Zero head turns to look at Stanley.

109 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - EVENING 109

Stanley and Zero are sitting together as Zero writes the letters -

STANLEY
Z - E - R - O.

ZERO
I'll help you dig your hole every day. Then you won't be too tired too teach.

STANLEY
You don't have to do that.

ZERO
You're kind of a slow digger. This way we'll finish about the same time.

STANLEY
Well, I guess I would be a better teacher if I wasn't so worn out.

Zero finishes writing his name.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
Good. See, Z makes the zzz sound. E is ee. R, rruh, and o, oh. See you use a capital Z because it's a proper noun, like the name of country, or if it's the first word of sentence.

ZERO
Zero isn't my real name.

STANLEY
Really? Even Pendanski calls you--

ZERO
My name's Hector. Hector Zeroni.

A contemporary handshake.

110 INT. CAMP - MESS HALL - EVENING 110

CLOSE UP on GROTESQUE SCAR. PULL BACK to reveal Mr. Sir's face, badly swollen with deep purple scratch marks. He supervises as Monk ladles chili into Squid's bowl with his one good arm.

Stanley avoids looking at Mr. Sir, keeps his head down as he pushes his tray along. Zero is with him.

SQUID (O.C.)
Whoa, Mr. Sir. What happened to your face?

There's a CRASH.

Stanley turns to see Mr. Sir holding Squid by the neck, pressing his face against the pot of chili.

MR. SIR
Is there something the matter with my face?

Squid gags. Mr. Sir lets him go, and he falls, hitting his head on the edge of the table.

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
(dagger eyes at Stanley)
Does anybody see anything wrong with my face?

Stanley looks down into his tray.

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
(to Squid)
I'm kind of handsome don't you think?

SQUID
(weakly)
Yes, Mr. Sir.

111 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 111

Dirt flies at breakneck speed over the edge of a hole.

INSIDE THE HOLE, Stanley and Zero work side by side.

ZERO
Twenty-six letters. So we can do five letters a day for four days, and then six letters on the fifth day.

STANLEY
That's good math.

ZERO
Well, I'm not stupid. I know everyone thinks I am. I just don't like answering stupid questions.

ABOVE - X-Ray looks down to see Zero helping Stanley dig his hole. He frowns as Squid appears at his side.

X-RAY
Must be nice to have your own personal slave.

112 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - DAY 112

Stanley is teaching Zero to read.

Five letters: K-L-M-N-O are written down the side of a piece of paper. Next to the letters are corresponding words: King - Like - Mom - Night - Over. Zero is copying *Mom* as he speaks.

ZERO
She couldn't always take me with her. I had to wait like on a porch step, or doorway. "Don't leave 'til I come back." She said I had to be brave, because she was trying to make a better life for us. Then one day, she didn't come back.

STANLEY
What happened to her?

Zero's gesture indicates he doesn't know.

ZERO
That's what hurts the most. If I had a million dollars, I'd hire a whole team of private investigators just to find out.

Stanley's face reflects his concern and sympathy for Zero.

113 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 113

X-Ray drinks from his canteen and watches the boys line up behind the water truck. Mr. Sir, his face swollen, hands Armpit his canteen. Armpit, head down, takes his canteen from Mr. Sir, without looking at his grotesque face.

ARMPIT
Thank you, Mr. Sir.

Mr. Sir fills Squid's canteen. Stanley is next in line.

MR. SIR (O.C.)
You thirsty, Caveman.

STANLEY
Yes, Mr. Sir.

Stanley, looking down, hands Mr. Sir his canteen. Mr. Sir takes it, and holds it off to the side, so that the water goes straight from the tank to the ground. He lets it run for several seconds then stops.

MR. SIR
You want more?

Again, he lets the water flow onto the dirt.

MR. SIR (CONT'D)
There, that should keep you awhile.

He gives the empty canteen back to Stanley.

STANLEY
Thank you, Mr. Sir.

The dark spot in the dirt quickly dries up under the hot sun.

114 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 114

Stanley is back in his hole, digging. Zero approaches.

ZERO
You want some water.

STANLEY
No, that's okay.

ZERO
You sure?

STANLEY
Well, yeah, I'll just take a little. Thanks.

As Stanley drinks, Zero steps down into Stanley's hole and starts to dig. Stanley moves to him and whispers, conspiratorially.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
It was a lipstick tube.

Zero looks at him, confused.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
The gold tube. K.B? I think it stands for Kate Barlow. Kissin' Kate Barlow's lipstick!

115 EXT. OLD WEST - TERRAIN - DAY 115 *

Horses hooves gallop past. One horse is taking the lead. Kissin' Kate Barlow rides faster than all her guys as they thunder across the plains. *

CLOSE ON - A WANTED POSTER. It boasts a picture of Kate, wearing Stanley's Grandfather's hat, and a fifty dollar reward for her capture. *

119 EXT. OLD WEST - BANK - DAY 119 *

Kate and one of her guys burst out of the bank, carrying bags of money. They leap on waiting horses, and ride away. *

A VINTAGE NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: KISSIN' KATE ELUDES POSSE! *

120 EXT. OLD WEST - TRAIN - DAY 120

Classic Western film footage of a train robbery, the gang seen in the distance. *

120A EXT. OLD WEST - CLIFFS - DAY 120A

Kate Barlow stands high on a cliff, watching her guys from a distance, hair blowing, eyes sparkling and jewelry flashing. *

121 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 121 *

Zero spits in his own finished hole and hurries to help Stanley. He jumps into the hole, and pushes Stanley aside.

ZERO
Lemme get it going here. Take a break for a minute.

Stanley sits at the edge of his hole, drinking from his canteen. The other guys gather around.

X-RAY
Same old story. The white man sits around while the brother does all the work.

SQUID
You should get yourself a whip, Caveman. Keep your slave from slackin' off.

STANLEY
Hey, it was his idea. Not mine.

X-RAY
Yeah, you don't understand, Squid. See, Caveman's doing Zero a big favor. Zero likes to dig holes.

As Zero continues digging, he throws a shovelful of dirt against X-Ray. X-Ray glares. Zigzag moves closer. The water truck is closing in on them. The boys move towards it.

ZIGZAG
What about me? I like to dig holes. Can I dig your hole too, Caveman?

STANLEY
I took the heat for the sunflower seeds.

SQUID
You're the one who spilled 'em.

MAGNET
I risked my goddamn life for those seeds, and all I got was one handful.

The boys move to line up at the water truck.

SQUID
Here Caveman. Go in front of me, since you're so much better than I am.

X-RAY
Now you insulted him, Squid. Caveman deserves to be at the front.

X-Ray makes an exaggerated gesture, inviting Stanley to step up.

STANLEY
That's okay.

X-RAY
No it's not okay. Get up here.

Stanley moves to the front of the line as Pendanski emerges from the truck.

PENDANSKI
Well, this is a first.

He hands Stanley a sack lunch, and begins filling his canteen.

Moving by his hole, Stanley opens his sack lunch; a sandwich with strange looking canned meat. A sorry apple. And a cookie.

Squid and Zigzag stand over him.

ZIGZAG
Hey, Caveman. I'll give you my cookie if you let me dig your hole.

Squid laughs.

ZIGZAG (CONT'D)
Here, take my cookie.

STANLEY
No, thanks.

ZIGZAG
He won't take my cookie. Please take my cookie.

He holds it in Stanley's face. Stanley pushes his hand away. Zigzag pushes him back, hard.

ZIGZAG (CONT'D)
Don't push me!

Stanley gets up, and holds out his hands, as if to say he doesn't want to fight. Zigzag pushes him again.

ZIGZAG (CONT'D)
I said, quit pushing.

Stanley is confused. Zigzag wails into him. Stanley falls and Zigzag jumps on top, pummeling him.

Zero drops his canteen at Pendanski's feet and rushes to Stanley's aid. He grabs Zigzag by the neck and pulls him off Stanley. He begins choking Zigzag.

Pendanski hurries to unlock a shotgun from the front seat of the truck.

Zero continues to choke Zigzag who is now gasping for breath.

ARMPIT
Stop, man. He can't breathe.

Zero squeezes tighter. Armpit jumps on him, and frees Zigzag.

SOUND OF GUN SHOT.

Smoke comes from Pendanski's shotgun, pointing upward.

Zigzag gags and gasps as he rubs his neck. The boys look at each other, fearful at what almost happened.

DISSOLVE TO:

122 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 122

Mr. Sir holds a large pistol. The Warden and OTHER COUNSELORS stand by.

PENDANSKI
Basically, Zero almost killed Ricky.

MR. SIR
Basically?

Warden looks at Stanley's battered and bruised face.

WARDEN
And what happened to you?

STANLEY
Nothing. It was no big deal.

ARMPIT
Ziggy was beating up the Caveman. Then Zero started choking Zigzag and I had to pull Zero offa him. It was all over before Mom fired his gun.

X-RAY
Zig just got a little hot. Out in the sun all day. The blood starts to boil. You know how it is.

WARDEN
No I don't. Is that what happened Zigzag?

ZIGZAG
Yeah, like X-Ray said. Working hard in the hot sun, while Caveman sits around doin' nothin. My blood boiled.

WARDEN
Excuse me? Caveman digs his holes just like everyone else.

ZIGZAG
Sometimes...

THE WARDEN
Excuse me?

She looks to Stanley.

SQUID
Zero's been digging part of Caveman's hole every day.

The Warden looks from Squid to Stanley to Zero.

STANLEY
I'm teaching him to read and write. It's sort of a trade...

Pendanski laughs.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
He's smart!

PENDANSKI
Oh yeah? Hey, Zero. What does C - A - T spell?

Zero is tight lipped.

PENDANSKI (CONT'D)
Oh he's a genius all right. He's so stupid he doesn't even know he's stupid.

WARDEN
Okay, from now on, I don't want anyone digging anyone else's hole. And no more reading lessons.

STANLEY
The hole still gets dug, so what's it matter who digs it?

WARDEN
You know why you're digging holes? Because it's good for you. It teaches you a lesson. If Zero digs your hole for you, you're not learning your lesson, are you?

STANLEY
Why can't I dig my own hole, and still teach Zero to read?

PENDANSKI
I know you mean well, Stanley, but it just causes him stress. That's what made his blood boil, not the hot sun.

ZERO
I'm not digging another hole.

WARDEN
Good.

Pendanski picks up Zero's shovel.

PENDANSKI
Yeah, you might as well try to teach this shovel to read. Here Zero. Take it. It's all you'll ever be good for. D-I-G

Zero takes the shovel and swings it like a baseball bat. SMASH! He slams it across Pendanski's smirking face. He's unconscious before he hits the ground.

ZERO
Dig.

Mr. Sir cocks his gun. Zero backs away, holding the shovel in front of him like a shield. Other counselors tend Pendanski.

WARDEN
Don't shoot. He can't go anywhere. The last thing we need is an investigation.

Zero continues to back away, and then begins to run out across the dry lake bed, disappearing in the haze.

MR. SIR
He'll be back.

Zero's canteen lay in the dirt. The Warden picks it up.

WARDEN
I want round the clock guards on all water sources.

She goes to her car, then stops and turns.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
I still expect seven holes.

123 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 123

Stanley digs alone. He stops and stares out into the distance.

ARMPIT (O.C.)
If he's not back by morning, he's dead.

124 INT. D-TENT - NIGHT 124

Stanley lay on top of his cot, staring at the ceiling. The other boys are getting into bed.

X-RAY
He's dead either way. If he stays out there, or if he comes back.

ZIGZAG
He's crawling across the ground right now. Wa-ter! Wa-ter! The buzzards are out there just waitin'... they eat the eyes first.

SQUID
Hors d'oeuvres.

Grim laughter.

MAGNET
And for dessert, they eat your cajones.

Groans and more grim laughter, as Stanley stares upwards.

125 EXT. DESERT ROAD - MORNING 125

The yellow school bus returns to camp.

126 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 126

Stanley's the only one left. He stares out at the distant horizon, it's mountains hazy in dimming light.

STANLEY
Zerooooo!

Nothing. Not even an echo. Stanley spits into his hole, and leaves.

127 INT. D-TENT - EVENING 127

Pendanski, with two black eyes and a bandaged nose, empties Zero's crate. The Warden and Mr. Sir watch.

MR. SIR
You sure he has no family?

PENDANSKI
He's a ward of the state. He was living on the streets when he was arrested.

WARDEN
Is there a caseworker who might ask questions?

PENDANSKI
He had nobody. He was nobody.

128 EXT. D-TENT - EVENING 128

It's the end of the workday. All the other boys, dirty and tired from digging, stream towards the showers and the Mess Hall. Stanley is stopped outside the tent, listening.

WARDEN (O.C.)
Okay, I want you to destroy his records. He was never here. Can you get into the state files from our computer?

129 INT. D-TENT - EVENING 129

PENDANSKI
Sure, but no one will ever look for him. No one cares about Hector Zeroni.

Stanley enters the tent and moves to get his towel and soap from his crate. The adults look to him.

WARDEN
Where is he?

STANLEY
I don't know.

MR. SIR
You're not doing him any favors if you're lying. He can't survive out there much longer.

STANLEY
I don't know where he is.

They stare after him as he walks out of the tent.

130 EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - PARKING LOT - MORNING 130

Stanley watches the Guard exit the bus followed by a NEW KID.

131 INT. MESS HALL - EVENING 131

The boys are eating. The new kid is a bundle of nerves. His fingers drum on the table. Everything about him is jumpy.

X-RAY
So what you in for, Twitch?

TWITCH
Joy riding. I never plan to steal one, but when I walked by a real nice car, I just start twitching. You think I'm jumpy now? You shoulda seen me in that Mustang convertible!

132 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - NIGHT 132

Twitch puts toothbrush and toothpaste in Zero's crate, and moves to Zero's cot. Stanley enters alone and watches him.

TWITCH
Hey, Caveman. What happened to the kid who used to sleep here?

STANLEY
I don't know...

TWITCH
(lays down)
Do we really have to get up at 4:30?

STANLEY
You get used to it. It's the coolest part of the day.

133 EXT. DIGGING AREA - MORNING 133

The water truck pulls to a stop. Stanley, canteen in hand, heads toward it, past a very worn-out Twitch.

STANLEY
The first hole's the hardest.

Mr. Sir is filling the canteens.

Stanley stares at the forbidding landscape, then back at the truck. He edges around to the side of it.

Through the window, the KEYS dangle from the ignition.

Stanley looks at Twitch, then starts to twitch himself. His fingers drum against his pant leg. He suddenly flings open the door to the truck, and jumps into the driver's seat.

MR. SIR
Hey!

He starts the engine. There's a BEEPING SOUND because he's not wearing a seat belt. As Mr. Sir rushes toward him, Stanley floors it. The motor roars, but the truck doesn't move.

TWITCH
Put it in gear!

Mr. Sir reaches the truck and grabs the inside of the door frame.

Stanley shifts the automatic transmission to D, for Drive.

The truck lunges forward. Mr. Sir spins and falls. The boys cheer as the truck continues to accelerate.

134 INT. TRUCK - DIGGING AREA - DAY 134

Stanley tightly grips the wheel, roaring away fast. His foot is pressed to the floor. He bounces in his seat, out of control, then BAM! the airbag explodes, the door flies open, and Stanley's thrown out of the truck as it crashes into a hole.

135 EXT. TRUCK - DIGGING AREA - DAY 135

The boys cheer even louder when they see the truck sticking up out of the hole. Mr. Sir shakes his head and walks steadily towards it.

Stanley groans. He pulls himself up, looks back and starts running, his empty canteen slapping against his thigh. He disappears into the haze.

ANGLE ON TRUCK

Behind it, in the distance, other groups of boys and counselors approach from all directions. Admiring Caveman's handiwork.

MONK
You shittin' me, *CAVEMAN* did this?!

ZIGZAG
Yeah, D-Tent rules, man.

136 EXT. DRY LAKE BED - DAY 136

The holes are few and far between. Hands on knees, Stanley catches his breath. He looks back to see the entire camp surrounding the truck.

Stanley moves past a cluster of holes. He steps over a dirt pile and looks down.

ANGLE ON six yellow spotted LIZARDS staring at him from the bottom of a hole. One leaps out towards him.

Stanley runs, his empty canteen slapping. Sound of distant voices and the revving of the truck engine drift towards him. Exhausted, he slows to a walk.

137 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 137

The entire camp tries to extricate the water truck from the hole.

138 EXT. DRY LAKE BED - DAY 138

Stanley heads towards the horizon line, the sun breaks through the haze to illuminate GOD'S THUMB.

Stanley is distracted by something stirring in the wind. An empty burlap sack from Mr. Sir's sunflower seeds. He picks it up, then notices a broken down structure in the distance.

Taking the empty sack, he heads towards what appears to be an old broken boat, upside-down, half buried in the dirt.

He circles around it. Faded lettering is still visible on the stern: MARY LOU. A hole has been dug, making it likely that something is living under the boat.

There's a stirring there. Stanley jumps back. An arm in an orange sleeve comes up out of the hole. Zero emerges, wasted.

STANLEY
Hey, Zero!

ZERO
You got any water?

STANLEY
No. I tried to bring you the whole water truck. But I drove it into a hole. Sorry.

ZERO
What's in the sack.

STANLEY
It's empty. C'mon, we'd better get back to camp.

ZERO
I'm not goin' back...you want some sploosh?

STANLEY
What?

Zero crawls back into his hole. Stanley follows.

139 INT. DRY LAKE BED - UNDER BOAT - DAY 139

Stanley crawls into the cramped space. A little bit of light comes through cracks in the "ceiling". His shovel lay on the ground, amid scattered empty old jars.

Zero is struggling to open an old jar of Kate Barlow's spiced peaches. Finally, he raises the blade end of the shovel.

ZERO
Sometimes you just have to...

He slams the top of the jar against the blade of the shovel, breaking off the lid. Unconcerned about broken glass, he quickly licks the jagged bottom of the lid, then the jagged edges of the jar, not letting any spill.

ZERO (CONT'D)
Here.

He offers the jar to Stanley.

STANLEY
What is it?

ZERO
Sploosh. That's what I call it.

Stanley takes the jar, and looks at it unsure.

STANLEY
Where'd you get it.

ZERO
Here, under the boat. Drink it.
It's good.

Stanley turns the jar around, trying to find a smooth edge. Zero nods encouragingly. Stanley takes a sip.

STANLEY
That is good!

Zero smiles as Stanley takes another drink.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
How many you got left?

ZERO
That's the last one.

Stanley licks his lips.

STANLEY
Oh man, we gotta head back now.

ZERO
I'm not going back.

STANLEY
You'll die out here.

ZERO
What's Mar- ya Low-oo?

Stanley stares. Zero stumbles up to the surface. Stanley follows.

140 EXT. DRY LAKE BED - EVENING 140

Zero points to the upside down letters on the back of the boat.

STANLEY
Mary Lou.

ZERO
I thought Y made the Yuh sound.

STANLEY
It does at the beginning of a word, but not at the end of... You see that mountain out there? Does it look like anything to you?

Zero follows Stanley's gaze, then weakly flashes a THUMBS-UP.

141 EXT. DRY LAKE BED - EVENING 141

Stanley's carrying the sack, now full of empty jars. Zero's using the shovel as a walking stick, as they head off towards God's Thumb.

FROM HIGH OVERHEAD the boys, two tiny, vulnerable figures, trudge across an enormous dry lake bed.

ZERO (V.O.)
I wonder who she was.

STANLEY (V.O.)
Who?

ZERO (V.O.)
Mary Lou. Someone must have loved her. Named his boat after her.

STANLEY (V.O.)
Yeah, I bet she looked great in a bikini...

142 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 142

The Warden and MR. SIR are looking out over the area. The boys are digging in the BACKGROUND.

WARDEN
Have them fill in these two rows, then dig a row in between.

MR. SIR
What are you going to do about Caveman? He's not like Zero, he's got a family.

WARDEN
In two weeks we'll report he's run away. Call in dogs, helicopters, the whole works. By then there'll be nothing left to find.

143 EXT. DRY LAKE BED - DAY 143 *

Hot and thirsty, the BOYS head wearily towards us. We see the agony on their faces. Zero grabs his stomach. He sinks to his knees, giving in to a groan.

Stanley offers the shovel as support, helping Zero to his feet. CLOSE ON Zero's face. He looks near death. *

ZERO *
(to Stanley)
You don't look too good.

STANLEY *
Yeah, well I think you drank too *
much sploosh... C'mon. *

From behind we watch the boys tramp wearily away. Shimmering heat distorts our view.

ANGLE on God's Thumb, still far, far away. The SUN is just above the thumb.

STANLEY (O.C) (CONT'D)
Man, it's like we're chasing the moon.

ZERO (O.C.)
What do you think's up there?

CLOSE ON STANLEY

STANLEY
Probably a Frosty Freeze...

ZERO
Good. I need a hot fudge sundae.

Stanley gives Zero the thumbs-up sign. Zero smiles weakly.

144 EXT. WHITE STONE CLIFFS - DAY 144

THEY trudge to the end of the lake bed, and find themselves at the base of huge white stone cliffs, rising straight up.

PAN ACROSS CLIFFS: There's no easy way up.

STANLEY
Well, at least it's shade.

A horrible RETCHING NOISE. Stanley turns to see Zero, bent over, having just thrown up. Zero takes several deep breaths, then straightens up.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
How about over there?

Zero can barely turn his head to see where his friend is pointing. A crack runs up the cliff, criss-crossing a series of rock ledges. It looks impossible.

CLOSE ON Stanley's HANDS giving Zero a boost.

Zero climbs up onto the first ledge. Stanley hands him the shovel and sack of jars, then climbs up with Zero's help.

SLOWLY PULL BACK, as they continue up a series of ledges.

DISSOLVE TO:

145 EXT. WHITE STONE CLIFFS - HIGHER UP - DAY 145

From a distance, they look small and insignificant, climbing up the giant cliffs.

CLOSE ON ZERO, hanging on precariously. He looks down.

ZERO'S POV: A long way down, which dizzily loses it's focus.

ZERO
Give me a word.

Stanley desperately clutches a rock as he climbs.

STANLEY
Um, R-O-C-K.

Zero concentrates on the word, so he doesn't have to think about the long way down.

ZERO
Rruh, o- kuh. Rock.

CLOSE ON STANLEY'S FOOT, as it finds a foothold, then slips out of it. Pebbles and a few rocks slide out from under him and fall all the way to the ground. Stanley holds on to the side of a rock, as he regains his footing, and continues up.

146 EXT. WHITE STONE CLIFFS - NEAR THE TOP - DAY 146

ZERO steps on a rock ledge. Unbeknownst to him, large cracks begin to form.

ANOTHER ANGLE - From the land above the cliff, we see Zero's hand reach up. Then the shovel comes up and over. Zero pulls himself to the top. He made it.

He's on level ground, high above the dry lake bed, but still about a quarter mile away from the mountain which has God's Thumb at its peak.

STANLEY'S HAND reaches the top. The sack of jars comes over. A BREAKING NOISE as Stanley's hand disappears. He cries out. Zero musters the energy to rush to the edge of the cliff and looking down HE SEES Stanley hanging on to a ledge. His legs dangle beneath him as the rock ledge he had been standing on tumbles to the ground. * * * *

He pulls himself up onto the ledge, then looks up at Zero. There's about ten feet of sheer cliff separating them. Zero disappears, then returns with the shovel.

Laying on top of the cliff, Zero reaches down as far as he can with the shovel. He wedges the shovel blade against the cliff, and holds it firmly in place.

Stanley grabs the shaft, and climbs up the cliff. Zero helps him over the top. He catches his breath and looks at God's Thumb, much closer now.

STANLEY
Thanks, Zero. Wow. We're almost there.

He notices Zero's blood on his sleeve, and realizes Zero's hands are badly gashed from holding the shovel in place.

Zero stares at them, exhausted, unable to move.

Stanley takes a jar out of the sack and smashes it against the shovel. Using a piece of broken glass as a knife, he cuts off the bottom half of his pant leg.

147 INT. CAMP - MESS HALL - EVENING 147

The boys are eating.

MAGNET
Maybe he found Zero. Maybe they're both still alive.

X-RAY
And maybe the Easter Bunny will come hippity-hoppity down the bunny trail.

SQUID
And my mom'll quit drinking, and my dad'll come home.

TWITCH
Man, when Caveman drove that truck....

ZIGZAG
That was awesome!

ARMPIT (O.C.)
The Caveman had style.

148 EXT. GOD'S THUMB - BASE OF MOUNTAIN - HIGHER UP - EVENING 148

The boys are climbing up the mountain. Pieces of Stanley's pants are tied around Zero's hands. Zero trails weakly behind Stanley now, as gnats swarm and Stanley swats at them. *

STANLEY
There weren't bugs back at Camp Green Lake. That means there must be water somewhere, right?

Zero gives Stanley the thumbs up sign, then wobbles and collapses. Stanley rushes to his side. *

STANLEY (CONT'D)
C'mon Hector...

Zero opens his eyes.

ZERO
I gotta tell you something.

He grabs Stanley's sleeve and offers his deathbed confession.

ZERO (CONT'D)
I stole the shoes.

Zero's eyes close. Stanley tries to rouse him -

STANLEY
Clyde Livingston's shoes?

But Zero doesn't respond. So Stanley hoists Zero's limp body up over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes, and, struggling to balance the weight, manages to carry Zero up the mountain. *

MUSIC UP: MADAME ZERONI'S MELODY

149 EXT. GOD'S THUMB - MOUNTAINSIDE - HIGHER UP - EVENING 149

Stanley is carrying Zero through a thick patch of weeds. He stumbles, but regains his balance and keeps going.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
(breathless)
We're really close now, Hector.

150 EXT. GOD'S THUMB - HIGHER UP - EVENING 150

The giant rock precipice glows in the moonlight. At it's base, a meadow.

WE SEE Stanley's head first. He rises up to the meadow, Zero over his shoulder, and staggers towards the precipice.

His foot steps on some gloppy mud, and slides out from under him. He tumbles into a muddy gully. Zero falls next to him, as Stanley's hand lands with a splat.

STANLEY
(whispers)
Mud.

He licks dirty water off his hands, then sits up and reaches around the muddy gully until his hands find a small puddle. He digs and THE PUDDLE GROWS! He scoops some water in his hands, and carefully takes it to Zero, letting it trickle onto his lips. Zero's eyes remain closed, but his tongue slips out the side of his mouth to lick the droplets.

Stanley returns to the puddle and digs deeper as the puddle continues to grow.

He unearths a round object and wipes the mud off it. It's a ONION. He bites into it. The strong juices make his eyes squint.

He takes it to Zero.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
Here eat this.

ZERO
(weakly opening his eyes)
What is it?

STANLEY
A hot fudge sundae.

Zero bites the onion, chews.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
(sings)
If only, if only,
the Woodpecker sighs,
The bark on the tree
was as soft as the skies.

Zero's eyes close.

151 INT. YELNATS CRUMMY APT. - KITCHEN - NIGHT 151

STANLEY(V.O.)
While the Wolf waits below
hungry and lonely.
He cries to the moo-oo-on,
if only, if only.

Grandfather is making scrambled eggs. Next to him, Stanley's father removes a lid from a steaming pot. A DECOMPOSING SNEAKER is boiling inside it. The kitchen fills with steam.

Stanley's Mother is eating at the kitchen table. She gags.

MOTHER
Oh my God! Can't you wait until
I'm finished eating?

FATHER
I have to get the timing just
right.

MOTHER
As if it matters.

Father turns to her stung by her words.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
I didn't mean that.

Grandfather, distracted by their quarrel, reaches for a jar of peach preserves on the shelf above the stove. When steam from the uncovered pot scalds his arm, he reacts by dropping the jar into the pot with the sneaker.

Father notices and angrily turns.

FATHER
Oh, that's just great! As if it matters.

He inspects his sneaker stew, a swirl of peach ooze and shoelaces. Then stops and sniffs. His eyes grow wide as he lifts a sneaker with his tongs and carries it to his wife.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Smell this.

She tries to push it away.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Just smell it.

She takes a whiff.

MOTHER
(annoyed)
I don't smell anything.

Mother, Father, and Grandfather all look at each other.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
(quiet awe)
I don't smell anything.

152 EXT. GOD'S THUMB - MOUNTAINSIDE - MEADOW - MORNING 152

Zero is still sleeping. A large pile of onions is beside him. Stanley comes back up the trail, carrying the shovel and sack of jars.

He turns to look at the vista, amazed at the staggering heights he's scaled, once carrying Zero, and now once again. *

Stanley goes to the water hole, and begins to dig with the shovel. Zero wakes up, and finds the onions. Looks to Stanley.

ZERO
How long have I been sleeping?

STANLEY
A long time...

Stanley brings him a jar full of water.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
How you feelin'?

Zero grins and gives Stanley a THUMBS-UP. But then Zero looks troubled as Stanley hands him another onion.

ZERO
It's all my fault you got sent to Camp Green Lake.

STANLEY
(laughs)
Yeah, right.

Zero looks up at him, solemnly, and bites into another onion.

ZERO
I didn't know those shoes were Sweet Feet's.

FLASHBACK TO:

153 INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY 153

A HOMELESS PERSON bites into a piece of bread.

While HOMELESS PEOPLE eat their lunch, CIVIC MINDED WOMEN prepare for a special event. There's a podium, with a table on either side of it. A WOMAN places a "Clyde Livingston" placard at a place at the table.

ZERO (V.O.)
People often donate their old clothes and stuff for anyone who needs 'em, so when I saw the old sneakers, I just....

Zero wanders barefoot into the shelter. A woman is putting up a sign: SILENT AUCTION, on a table set up against the wall. Zero moves along the table, past baskets of gourmet food, beauty products, bottles of wine, artwork, jewelry. Then, the famous SHOES.

He takes the shoes.

154 EXT. GOD'S THUMB - MEADOW - MORNING 154

ZERO
I didn't know they were famous.

Stanley listens, amazed.

156 INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY 156 *

The whole place is going crazy. *

ZERO (V.O.)
The next thing I know, everyone's yelling, The shoes are gone! The shoes are gone! Where are the shoes?

Everyone's rushing around Zero, and he's just standing there, wearing the shoes. He walks out of the shelter, past an oblivious society woman on her cell phone.

157 EXT. OVERPASS - DAY 157

Zero quickly walks, then runs away from the shelter, towards -

AN OVERPASS -- LATER

WE HEAR a police siren. Zero quickly takes off the shoes, ties the laces together, and throws them with all his might over the side of the overpass. They sail up and then fall out of view.

158 EXT. STREET BELOW OVERPASS - DAY 158

The shoes fall, faster and faster, towards the street where Stanley is walking, and land right on his head.

159 EXT. GOD'S THUMB - MEADOW - MORNING 159

Stanley just looks at Zero, who looks at the ground.

ZERO
I ended up getting busted the next day for lifting a pair from Payless. If I had just kept those old, smelly shoes, neither of us would be here right now.

Stanley thinks about all of this for a moment.

STANLEY
It's more than just a coincidence, it's destiny...

DISSOLVE TO:

160 EXT. GOD'S THUMB - MEADOW - NIGHT 160

Stanley and Zero still lay there, talking, looking up at thousands of stars filling the night sky. A big grin stretches across Stanley's face.

STANLEY
...this may sound really weird. I mean, here we are in the middle of nowhere, but I've never felt happier... I don't know, maybe I'm crazy from eating all those onions.

Zero takes another bite.

STANLEY (cont'd)
How many do you think we've eaten?

ZERO
Sixty-five onions a day, three days, about a hundred and ninety-five onions a piece.

STANLEY
(nodding)
You know, whatever the Warden's looking for, I think it has to do with Kissin' Kate...

ZERO
What do you think it is?

STANLEY
I think we gotta dig one last hole.

161 EXT. DRY LAKE BED - MORNING 161

The two boys are heading across the dry lake bed. Zero is carrying the shovel. Stanley has a sack full jars and onions.

162 EXT. DRY LAKE BED - 1915 - MORNING 162

From far away WE SEE two FIGURES trudging. It looks like one is carrying a shovel.

CLOSE ON - the shovel is a rifle. It's carried by Trout Walker, now twenty years older. With him is Linda, the red-headed school girl, now 30. Looks like life's been hard.

TROUT WALKER
Kissin' Kate Barlow can kiss my ass.

The lake is almost gone now. The peach trees are withered, skeletal. The warden's cabin sits isolated.

163 INT. KATE'S CABIN - 1915 - MORNING 163

It's bare and dirty with no electricity or indoor plumbing, just a bed. By the bed is a pair of black cowboys boots, studded with turquoise. A sleeping Kate Barlow, much older now, opens her eyes. She senses something. Sam appears ghostlike and moves toward her.

KATE BARLOW
Oh, Sam, I know it's hot, but I'm so cold....

SAM
I can fix that.

Kate closes her eyes and reaches out to him as Sam moves to her. Then, BANG! Sam disappears, as Trout Walker kicks open the cabin door.

Kate opens her eyes to see the blurry end of a rifle, two inches from her nose.

TROUT WALKER
You got exactly five seconds to tell us where you've hidden your loot.

Linda rummages through the cabin, dumping drawers and knocking things from the shelves of cabinets.

KATE BARLOW
There ain't no loot, Trout.

TROUT WALKER
Don't give me that. You've robbed every bank between Hell and Houston. One.... Two....

LINDA
(whirls to face Kate)
Where is it?!

KATE BARLOW
Linda Miller, is that you?

TROUT WALKER
Three....

LINDA
I've been Linda Walker for the last thirteen years.

KATE BARLOW
Oh, I'm so sorry. You must have married him for his money.

TROUT WALKER
Four...

LINDA
Well, it's all gone now. Dried up with the lake. The livestock, the peaches. I kept thinking, this drought can't last forever...but it hasn't rained since the day they killed Sam.

TROUT
Five.

KATE BARLOW
Go ahead, Trout, kill me.

TROUT
Hell, I'm not going to kill you yet. But by the time we're finished with you, you're going to wish you were dead.

KATE BARLOW
I've been wishing I was dead for last twenty years.

Linda eye-balls a shovel leaning against the stone fireplace.

LINDA
Maybe she buried it...

164 EXT. KATE'S CABIN - 1915 - MORNING 164

Kate, barefoot, walks across hot sand under the blazing sun. Her legs have been tied loosely together, so she can walk, but not run. Trout pushes her in the back with the rifle. Linda holds a shovel.

TROUT
You ain't going to stop walking until you take us to it.

LINDA
You're gonna tell us sooner or later, Miss Katherine. Might as well be sooner...

KATE BARLOW
Oh, Linda. You were such a good student.

Trout hits her with the butt of his rifle, and knocks her to the ground. Kate stares away in the distance, then back to Trout with a smile.

KATE BARLOW (CONT'D)
I sure hope you like to dig, Trout. 'Cause you, your children, and your children's children can dig for the next 100 years and you'll still never find it.

Suddenly, a Yellow-spotted lizard hurries into frame next to her. Linda and Trout back up instinctively, but Kate reaches out to it.

LINDA
Look out!

Trout shoots, but the lizard is moving fast now and he misses. The lizard leaps onto Kate's outstretched arm. It's black teeth sink into her skin.

Despite spasms of pain, Kate manages another smile.

KATE BARLOW
Start digging, Trout.

Trout, rifle trained on the lizard, stands with an hysterical Linda. Kate Barlow dies laughing.

DISSOLVE TO:

165 EXT. CAMP - WARDEN'S CABIN - DAY 165

Same spot. WE SEE all of the holes that have been dug over the years. The camp boys are still digging. PAN across hole to camp office. A BMW is parked in the dirt parking lot.

The boys speculate as Twitch starts twitch[illegible]

X-RAY
Maybe they're coming for Caveman's body.

SQUID
If there's anything left of it...

A woman in a suit hurriedly exits the cabin and roars away.

166 INT. CAMP - WARDEN'S CABIN - DAY 166

The Warden in serious discussion with Mr. Sir and Pendanski.

MR. SIR
You know she's going to be back...

PENDANSKI
And next time with a court order...

WARDEN
We'll just tell her the truth. He ran away. Right?

She looks to Pendanski and Mr. Sir, who both look unsure.

PENDANSKI
He ran away after he heard he was going to be released?

MR. SIR
It's been almost two days... You know he's dead. What are we going to do?

The Warden glares at him.

WARDEN
If you both want your shares you'll do as I say.

The men both nod, reluctantly.

167 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 167

Boys are going in and out of showers, tents, and the wreck room. A few are still digging.

PAN past where boys are digging, then on out to the most distant holes.

Stanley and Zero, both of them sweating, check the hole for lizards before they scurry down into it. THEY CAN HEAR the voices of the boys fading into the dusk.

STANLEY
Let's wait here until it's dark...

168 EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 168

Day fades to night.

169 INT. CAMP - D-TENT - NIGHT 169

Camera floats over the boys, lying awake.

MAGNET
I guess we'll get someone new tomorrow.

They somberly look at empty cot. Squid pulls his blanket over his head.

170 EXT. DIGGING AREA - NIGHT 170 *

The wind howls eerily. Doors rattle and creek. Stanley with * the shovel, and Zero carrying the sack, emerge from the hole and move past other holes as they creep closer to the camp compound. They reach the landmark rock.

STANLEY
(whispers)
I think this is it.

ZERO
You *think*?

Stanley climbs down into the hole which is pitch black. He starts to dig. Zero watches anxiously. Only the top half of Stanley is visible. The rest of him is lost in darkness.

ZERO (CONT'D)
We don't have a whole lot of time. *
I'm gonna try to get another *
shovel. *

STANLEY *
Be careful. *

Zero heads off.

171 EXT. CAMP - SUPPLY SHED - NIGHT 171

Zero edges around the corner of the Library. He flattens himself against the padlocked door, as Pendanski, on patrol, walks by with his flashlight.

Zero waits a moment, then studies the shed and his eyes fix on the dilapidated roof.

172 EXT. CAMP - SUPPLY SHED ROOF - NIGHT 172

Zero rips up a splintered piece of wood on the roof, and reaches down into the shed for a shovel, almost falling in.

The doors to the shed rattle in the wind. Pendanski shines his light on them, just below Zero.

173 EXT. DIGGING AREA - NIGHT 173

Stanley digs up a shovel full of dirt, and brings it close to his face so he could see it.

ZERO (O.C.)
How's it goin'?

STANLEY
Who knows? I could be digging up diamonds and not see them.

Zero, shovel in hand, climbs down into the hole with him. They work back to back.

ZERO
I don't think Kissin' Kate Barlow would a buried it this deep.

STANLEY
She had a whole gang to dig for her.

ZERO
Yeah, just like the warden has us.

STANLEY
Let's work on making it wider.

They scrape their shovels down the sides of the hole.

ZERO
How do we do know one of her gang didn't already come back and dig up the treasure.

STANLEY
We don't. We don't know nothing.

Stanley's shovel CLANKS against something hard, hidden in the darkness. They look at each other, amazed.

Stanley digs sideways into the darkness. He tries to pull something out, but can't budge it. Zero joins him.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
It's some kind of metal box.

Stanley and Zero struggle together and pull out a metal suitcase. Suddenly, they are BLINDED by a BRIGHT LIGHT.

WARDEN (O.C.)
Thank you. You boys have been a big help.

The Warden points a flashlight. The Warden is wearing a long T-shirt and boots. Mr. Sir points a gun, dressed only in pajama pants. The Warden starts toward the hole then gasps, and quickly backs off.

A YELLOW SPOTTED LIZARD is perched on the suitcase, which Zero holds on his lap. A SECOND LIZARD crawls across Zero's fingers.

Stanley looks down. He is standing in a nest of LIZARDS. They are crawling over his feet and up his legs. One crawls out of his pocket.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
(to Mr. Sir)
Get in there and pull it out.

Mr. Sir looks at the lizards, unsure.

MR. SIR
(lights a cigarette)
You get it.

Both boys remain still as statues. A lizard crawls onto Stanley's cheek. It's foot presses against his tightly closed mouth.

A flashlight bobs. Pendanski joins them as Mr. Sir drags on his cigarette.

PENDANSKI
(staring into the hole)
Jesus....
(MORE)

PENDANSKI (cont'd)
(to Mr. Sir)
I thought you quit.

MR. SIR
Yeah, well sometimes sunflower seeds just don't cut it. Hey, Caveman, you're innocent. Your lawyer came to get you yesterday. Too bad you weren't here.
(to the Warden)
At least we'll have a body to give her.

PENDANSKI
What about Zero?

WARDEN
Zero was never here. We've got lots of holes to choose from.

The lizard on Stanley's cheek flicks it's tongue.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
(hands on her hips)
Do you know how long I've been waiting for this?

174 EXT. DIGGING AREA - 1960 - DAY 174

A nine year old red headed GIRL, one hand on her hip, the other limply holding a tiny shovel, cries out.

YOUNG WARDEN
I'm tired!

There are quite a few holes around, but not nearly as many as there are today.

The girl's mother and father stop digging nearby. Worn out, they give her sympathetic looks. Trout Walker, 80 years old now, and nasty looking, won't stop for nothin'.

TROUT
You want to quit? After forty years, you want to quit now? Someday you'll thank your crazy grandpa!

ed-eyed from tears and fatigue, the little Warden stares at er grandfather as she begins to dig again.

DISSOLVE TO:

175 EXT. DIGGING AREA - MORNING 175

The warden, eyes red from lack of sleep is staring at the lizard covered suitcase. The sun is starting to come up.

WARDEN
Maybe we should just shoot them.

PENDANSKI
Who? The lizards or the kids?

From down in the hole, Zero sounds like he is trying to read something.

ZERO
St...st...sta...sta...

Moving his eyes only, Stanley glances at Zero.

Headlights shine in the distance from back at the camp compound. The Warden and Mr. Sir look over to see the outlines of two cars, one the BMW, pull into the parking lot.

WARDEN
That can't be her already.

MR. SIR
Well it ain't the Girl Scouts, selling cookies.

WARDEN
Go in there and get it, they're obviously not biting...

A tarantula moves across the ground near Mr. Sir's feet. A lizard leaps off of Stanley's shoulder, pounces, and devours it.

MR. SIR
Not biting, eh?

He turns and shoots the lizard. The noise sends the other lizards scurrying over Stanley, who remains statue-like.

THE WAKE-UP HORN BLARES in the distance.

WARDEN
Shit. All right, take the boys to the wreck room. Tell them there may be people coming around today asking a lot of questions. They are not to talk to anyone.
(MORE)

WARDEN (cont'd)
As long as they keep their mouths shut, they won't have to dig any more holes. But if they talk they'll be severely punished.

PENDANSKI
What should I say you'll do to them?

WARDEN
Let them use their imaginations.

Pendanski takes a last look at Stanley and Zero in the hole, then heads back to the compound.

ZERO
Stanley...

Moving his eyes only, Stanley glances at Zero.

ZERO (CONT'D)
Is your last name your first name spelled backwards?

Lizards scurry over Stanley's head and face, and up Zero's arm.

176 EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - MORNING 176

MS. MORENGO, a lawyer in a tailored suit, strides quickly out to the digging area. She is followed by a MAN in a suit and cowboy boots, two uniformed TEXAS RANGERS, and a flustered, fast-talking Pendanski.

PENDANSKI
We tried to call, but the phones around here are not always working.

177 EXT. DIGGING AREA - SAME 177

A lizard crawls over Stanley's head and down between his eyes.

Mr. Sir tries to stop the legal entourage as they come charging forward.

MR. SIR
You better not go any further.

MORENGO
(pushing Mr. Sir aside)
Where's Stanley?

Mrs. Morengo looks down into the hole to see Stanley looking up at her, Zero kneeling down over the trunk looking at something on the top of it, and all the lizards surrounding them. She stops in her tracks.

MORENGO (CONT'D)
Oh my God.

The man in the suit, an Assistant Attorney General, walks up behind her, and looks down at them.

ASST ATTY GENERAL
(to Stanley and Zero)
Don't move. Keep your head still.
(to Warden)
How long have they been down there?

WARDEN
They broke into my cabin about an hour ago. I woke up and saw them running out with my trunk. They ran out here and fell....

MRS. MORENGO
And you've done nothing to get them out?

WARDEN
Just what do you suggest, counselor?

ASST ATTY GENERAL
It's a miracle they're still alive.

The Warden nods, trying to hide her disappointment.

MRS. MORENGO
This wouldn't have happened if you'd released him to me yesterday.

WARDEN
Excuse me. It wouldn't have happened if he wasn't a thief.

STANLEY
That's not true!

Stanley can't take the false accusations any longer. He furiously pulls himself out of the hole. Everyone steps back. As he rises, the lizards descend, crawling off of him.

Mrs. Morengo and the Asst. Attorney General move to Stanley excitedly. But Stanley keeps back, not knowing whom to trust.

Zero, emboldened by Stanley, rises on wobbly legs holding the suitcase. As he climbs out, the lizards scurry down his body, and back into the hole.

THE WARDEN
(embraces Zero)
Thank God you're okay.

She tries to take the suitcase from him but he jerks it free.

ZERO
It's Stanley's!

WARDEN
You've been caught red handed. If I press charges, Stanley will be sent right back to prison. However, in view of all the circumstances, I may be willing...

ZERO
It's got his name on it.

Everyone looks.

CLOSE UP ON STANLEY and the name, STANLEY YELNATS in bold black letters.

ZERO (CONT'D)
See. Stan-ley Yel-nats.

WARDEN
That's imposs....

MR. PENDANSKI
(to no one in particular)
He can't read.

MRS. MORENGO
C'mon Stanley...

Zero smiles at Stanley as he hands him the suitcase and they walk back towards camp.

MRS. MORENGO (CONT'D)
I'm Carla Morengo, your father's patent attorney. This is Mr. Richardson, Assistant Attorney General for the State of Texas. We're here to get take home.

WE FOLLOW a lizard as it scurries across the sand and then

PAN UP TO REVEAL:

178 EXT. TEXAS DESERT - 1899 - EVENING 178

Sam passes a couple bottles of onion tonic to A PAIR OF COWBOYS standing before him. *

SAM
Drink half a bottle each tonight, then the other half in the morning.

One Cowboy drinks it down as his partner opens a bottle, sniffs it, and shudders. *

SAM (CONT'D)
There ain't a lizard in the world that'll bite you when you've got that much onion juice in you.

PARTNER
You sure Sam?

SAM
Tell you what, if it don't work, I'll give you your money back.

Sam and the Cowboy chuckle, their laughter fading as their bodies do the same. *

180 EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - PARKING LOT - DAY 180

The suitcase sits in the open trunk of Mrs. Morengo's car, which is parked in front of the Warden's cabin. Stanley stands by the car with Mrs. Morengo. Zero hovers nearby. Overhead, storm clouds gather.

ANGLE ON D-TENT -- Squid appears in the entry flap.

SQUID
They're alive!

The Warden sits on her porch with her face in her hands. Mr. Sir and Pendanski stand behind her, looking scared. The Warden stands up suddenly, looking towards the trunk of Morengo's car.

WARDEN
Excuse me! This is not fair...

The Asst. Attorney General and his Marshall stop her with harsh stares. Mrs. Morengo motions Stanley into the car. Stanley stops, and looks over at Zero.

Zero gives him a THUMBS-UP.

STANLEY
I'm not leaving without Zero.

MS. MORENGO
I suggest we go. Your parents are looking forward to seeing you.

ZERO
I'll be okay...

Pendanski and Mr. Sir move to either side of Zero. Pendanski beams his phony smile.

PENDANSKI
Don't worry. We'll take good care of Hector.

Mr. Sir nods as he places a firm grip on Zero's shoulder. * But Stanley isn't moving.

STANLEY
I am not leaving without Zero. *

Ms. Morengo has no choice.

MS. MORENGO
(to the AAG)
May I see Hector's file?

ASST ATTY GENERAL
Certainly. Ms. Walker?

The Warden, still staring at the trunk, motions to Pendanski.

WARDEN
Bring me the file for Hector Zeroni.

Pendanski stares at her.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
(turns to him)
Just get it!

Pendanski moves across the compound to the office. Stanley, gives Zero another THUMBS-UP as the guys from D-Tent surround them. *

MAGNET
Hey, Zero!

X-RAY
I can't believe you guys made it, man!

SQUID
We thought you were buzzard food.

Armpit punches Stanley in the arm. Then hugs him.

ARMPIT
Whew, you stink!
(to Ms. Morengo)
Hey, lady, you got pen and paper?

She gives it to him. Armpit writes then gives it to Stanley.

ARMPIT (CONT'D)
Call my mom. Tell her I said I was sorry. Tell her *Theodore* said he was sorry.

Stanley smiles and nods as Pendanski returns from the office.

PENDANSKI
There seems to be no record of Hector Zeroni.

MS. MORENGO
So you have no claim of authority over him?

Pendanski is silent.

MS. MORENGO (CONT'D) *
C'mon, Hector, you're coming with us. *

ASST ATTY GENERAL *
(on the phone)
Yes, my office will take control of this facility, immediately.
(to the Uniformed Guard)
Place Ms. Walker under arrest.

They can't believe their ears. And then, LIGHTENING FLASHES, THUNDER, IT STARTS TO RAIN! Everyone looks up, shocked. The boys go wild.

Mrs. Morengo gets into her car quickly, while Stanley and Zero enjoy the downpour with their D-Tent boys. High-fives all around.

X-RAY
I can't believe you guys are getting out of here!

Other boys come out of their tents looking in awe at the rain.

MRS. MORENGO
C'mon, guys, time to go!

Stanley gets in the back seat with Zero, and the car takes off.

181 INT. MRS. MORENGO'S CAR - DAY 181

Mrs. Morengo drives as Stanley and Zero sit in the backseat.

MRS. MORENGO
Clyde Livingston's shoes were stolen from the shelter at 3:17. I've found a lovely girl who saw you leaving the school at 3:20. So you couldn't have stolen Clyde Livingston's shoes.

ZERO
He didn't. I did.

Morengo glances at Zero in her rearview mirror.

MRS. MORENGO
I didn't hear that.

181A EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY 181A

Stanley and Zero turn to watch the compound disappear behind them. The boys are all dancing, like they're in a mosh pit at a concert. In the rain.

STANLEY (V.O.)
You're probally wondering what was in the suitcase. Gold? Diamonds?

182 INT. YELNATS CRUMMY APARTMENT - DAY 182

The suitcase is on the kitchen table. Stanley, Mother, Grandpa, and Ms. Morengo watch as Stanley's Father drills into two locking mechanisms on the suitcase. Zero stands off to the side, quietly watching. Father sets down the drill, opens one latch, than another, then opens the chest. It is filled with Kate Barlow's bounty. Sparkling jewelry, gold coins, and more.

STANLEY (V.O)
Sure, there was some of that, but more valuable were some papers which had belonged to my great grandfather.

Stanley's father pulls out a sheath of old papers. Stock certificates, bonds. The name STANLEY YELNATS is on a Standard Oil $25,000 bond dated January 19th, 1901.

STANLEY
By the time our lawyer figured it all out, my best friend, Hector Zeroni and I each got less then a million dollars.

Stanley throws an arm around Zero.

GRANDPA
Did you say Zeroni?

Grandpa's stunned expression changes into a strange little smile as he goes to the boys and hugs them both close to him.

BLUE SKY AND SUN -- TILT DOWN TO -

183 EXT. YELNATS NEW HOUSE - DAY 183

The yard is huge, the swimming pool inviting. Both are filled with people. There's a party going on.

STANLEY (V.O.) (CON'T)
But not a lot less.

Armpit springs across the diving board into a perfect cannonball. Making a gigantic splash.

STANLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It was enough for my dad to market his new invention and for Hector to hire some private investigators.

Stanley and the pretty girl from school talk together near the patio. We move past them to see Clyde Livingston and HIS WIFE talking to Squid. Mother Yelnats passes carrying a plate of food.

STANLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You'll have to fill in the holes, yourself.

Grandpa talks to Ms. Morengo, who politely smiles and nods.

GRANDFATHER
Luck has nothing to do with anything - it's all about hard work and perseverance.....

We follow Mother inside the house and see Zigzag sitting on the floor, less than two feet from a huge big screen TV. Behind him, on the couch eating, are X-Ray, in new designer glasses, and Squid.

X-RAY
Carviar.

He takes a bite then gags, and spits it out into a napkin.

SQUID
Better stick to nachos.

184 EXT. YELNATS NEW HOUSE - DAY 184

Stanley watches from the doorway, with everyone behind him, as the door opens on a beat-up old car in the driveway. A rumpled PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR, emerges from the driver's seat, then Zero emerges from the backseat. He looks to Stanley and gives him a THUMBS UP, then reaches into the backseat for HIS MOTHER'S hand. She emerges like a deer caught in headlights. Zero hands the man a check, the P.I. pats Zero on the shoulder, returns to his car and drives off.

Zero guides his mother, who timidly approaches the front door as everyone stares at her.

185 INT. YELNATS NEW HOUSE - DAY 185

ZIGZAG(O.S.)
It's starting!

Zero gently leads his Mom into the living room where everyone settles around the television. Sitting on top of it are Clyde's stolen shoes, encased in Plexiglas.

Stanley sits between his Mother and Father on the couch, who lean behind him to kiss each other. Grandpa stands, a hand resting proudly on his grandson's shoulder.

Zero looks lovingly at his own mother, who smiles back at him.

BEGIN CLOSING TITLES

Then, a commercial starts...

186 INT. SWEET FEET'S BATHROOM (ON TV SCREEN) - MORNING 186

Sweet Feet Livingston stands wrapped in a towel. He turns to the camera with an easy smile.

SWEET FEET
To my fans I'm known as Sweet Feet.
But to my wife I'm known as...

The camera pulls back to reveal his wife, holding a pair of sneakers out in front of her, distastefully.

MRS. SWEET FEET
Stinky Feet.

SWEET FEET
But that's all over now - thanks to Sploosh. It doesn't just mask the odor, it eliminates it completely. Right honey?

MRS. SWEET FEET
That's right!

She throws the shoes behind her as Sweet Feet takes her in his arms.

SWEET FEET
I just spray a little on each foot every morning... And now I really do have sweet feet.

MRS. SWEET FEET
Plus, he likes the tingle.

SPLOOSH CAN APPEARS IN FRAME

As he kisses her, CLOSE ON the can of SPLOOSH. Near the bottom is a small HEART surrounding the initials K.B.

SEXY FEMALE ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Sploosh! Made from all natural ingredients by the friendly folks at K.B. Laboratories....You'll like the tingle.

Everyone at the party CHEERS.

187 INT YELNATS NEW HOUSE - DAY 187

Sitting on the couch, Stanley beams at his Father, who leans to kiss his Mother while Grandpa stands behind them, a hand resting proudly on his grandson's shoulder.

Zero looks lovingly at his own mother, who smiles back at him.